

Composting

Save Money and the Environment



What is Composting?

Composting is the controlled decay of organic material such as grass clippings, leaves, wood shavings, cardboard, and paper.



- In Fort Wayne, Landscape debris makes up 13.4% of all residential garbage going to the landfill.
- The more materials you compost, the more it could impact what you pay for garbage collection.
- Start by making sure your neighborhood association allows composting

Build Your Compost:

1 part “green” = fresh grass clippings,
manure, garden plants, and fruit/vegetable
scraps (no meat, dairy, or fats/oils)

3 parts “brown” = dried leaves and plants, branches, and woody
materials

Mix and moisten, turn occasionally until dark and crumbly (several
weeks to a year)

What NOT to Compost

- Large twigs and limbs
- Meat products, Eggs, or kitchen grease
- Pet waste

What to Compost

- Yard waste such as leaves, grass clippings, and wood shavings
- Kitchen waste including coffee grounds, and fruit/vegetable matter
- Shredded cardboard, paper

Methods

- Compost pile
 - A regular compost pile in the yard
- Bin
 - A bin to store the compost inside (helps contain the heat)
- Tumbler
 - Bin to store the compost
 - Speeds up the composting process by allowing easy mixing of the compost
- Vermicomposting
 - Composting using worms
 - This method should not have the heating component because that will kill the worms





When is Compost Ready to Use?

DO NOT introduce compost before it's ready

It can cause damage to the plants and soil should:

- Smell Earthy – not sour or like ammonia
- Not heat up when wetted or turned
- Be Crumbly in texture
- Look like dark soil

Benefits:



- **Suppresses weed growth** and reduced erosion
- **Reduces need for fertilizer** because you would be creating your own fertilizer
- **Promotes root growth** which then decreases runoff (more water caught in the roots and less into the drains)
- **Soil structure can improve** (it can become easier to plant in and work with)
- **Reduces erosion** which helps keep sediment and runoff pollution from getting into the rivers
- **Help balance soil pH** which promotes plant survival by making the soil stronger and more nutrient rich
- **Improves soil life** by allowing good bacteria to break down mulch and plant debris in order to add that nutrients to the soil
- **Soil aeration** occurs more because insects and worms can absorb the nutrients from the compost
- **Adds iron and manganese** to the soil which is often absent from many store-bought fertilizers
- **Compost allows soil to retain water** better which then reduces the frequency of watering

No Backyard?

Drop off compostable material at a Fort Wayne/Allen County community composting Facility

City Utilities' Biosolids, Lime & Yard Waste Recycling site:

6202 Lake Avenue
(260) 427-5535

Keep it Clean and Tidy

Your compost **MUST NOT** attract rodents or create a nuisance. If this occurs, local law enforcement can require you to clean it up, modify, move, or eliminate your compost pile if it creates a health or sanitary issue.

Resources

www.ACwastewatcher.org
<https://utilities.cityoffortwayne.org/>
www.epa.gov

Questions?

Call the City of Fort Wayne
by dialing 311 or
(260)427-8311