



HOME COMPOSTING

Composting at home is easy and fun. It is a great source of mulch for your garden and a way to reuse what you would put in your garbage can. The average garbage can contains 20% of materials that could be composted. Vegetables, fruit, egg shells, paper towels, newspaper, lawn clippings, weeds and coffee grounds are all compostable.

Compost can be used as a soil amendment, mulch, transplanting soil, nutrient and for erosion control. It is defined as a soft, crumbly, brownish or black substance that results from the decomposition of organic materials. It is created by piling organic materials together and letting them rot. Heat, water and bacterial action are necessary for decomposition. The five steps in decomposition are:

- * combining carbon (brown material) and nitrogen (green material).
- * chopping up materials into small pieces
- * moisture
- * aeration (turning the pile)
- * volume; compost reduces 20 to 1

HERE IS HOW TO GET STARTED

1. Find a convenient spot with easy kitchen access that is unobtrusive, also consider pets, raccoons & birds.

2. Decide whether you want an open pile or an enclosed structure. If you choose to pile compost, I suggest doing it under a tree for wind & rain protection. Loose piles take longer to breakdown and often get wet. You must also be concerned with kitchen food waste due to raccoons, keeping the pile warm in winter and the smell of the pile as it breaks down. If you make or purchase a bin it is best to place it away from wooden fences as the heat from the compost could rot the wood.

3. Layer, layer, layer. Always layer your materials. Place brown dry materials on the bottom. Add the wetter green materials and continue to repeat the process.

BROWN = leaves, twigs, straw, newspaper, toweling
GREEN = grass, yard debris, kitchen waste

4. Keep the pile wet. Water it once a week. Turn the pile weekly. Chop materials up when you add them to aid in the breakdown process.

5. Keep the interior of you pile warm 120 to 150 degrees. This will speed up decomposition and kill weed seeds. If you have trouble keeping it warm you can add a small amount of fertilizer. In the winter I add a can of soda to help heat up the pile.

6. Composting takes between 6 weeks and 6 months depending upon the size of materials you add, the volume and heat generated.

7. Odor problems generally mean that you have too many green materials. Balance your compost by adding more brown materials and turning more.

You can add the following to your compost sparingly. Fireplace ashes, lime, bone meal, fertilizer, and garden soil. I recommend 1/2 shovel at a time.

DO NOT PUT THE FOLLOWING IN YOUR PILE
meat or dairy products pet feces
blackberries tomato seeds

Government cannot close its eyes to the pollution of waters, to the erosion of soil, to the slashing of forests any more than it can close its eyes to the need for slum clearance and schools.
Franklin D. Roosevelt

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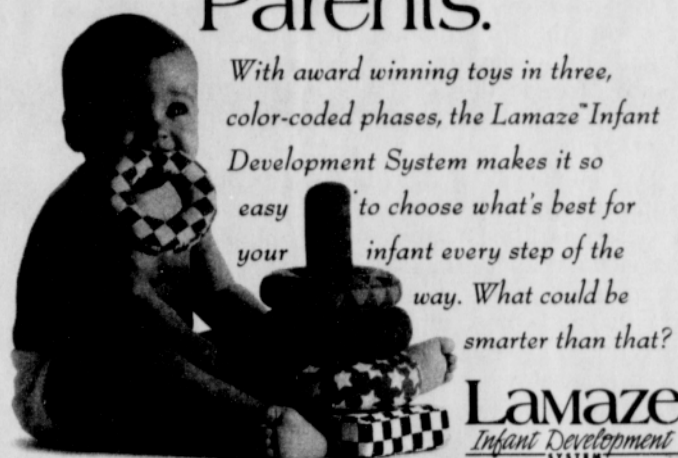
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Resolved, that the women of this nation in 1876, have greater cause for discontent, rebellion and revolution than the men of 1776. Susan B. Anthony

Social science affirms that a woman's place in society marks the level of civilization.
Elizabeth Cady Stanton

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