Got Good Dirt?

Backyard Composting
Making Decisions

Ultimate Dirt Machine (Digester bin) = $50
Go Plastics, Georgia
Retail value over $100

Wishing Well Composter = $50
Covered Bridge Organics, Ohio
Retail value $74 or more
Making Decisions

Yard Butler - Compost Aeration Tool
$20

Compost Thermometer
$10

Sure-Close Pail = $5
Retail value $20
Add a pail to hold your food scraps in the kitchen until you’re ready for a trip to the compost bin.
To help make your decision
Compost

A fixer for soil issues
Healthy Soil

Soil health is defined as continued capacity of soil to function as a vital living ecosystem that sustains plants, animals, and humans.

- Regulates water
- Sustains plant and animal life
- Filters and buffers potential pollutants
- Cycles nutrients
- Provides support and physical stability

Management choices affect the amount of soil organic matter, soil structure, and soil depth as well as water and nutrient holding capacity.
How To Start A Pile

• Lay down base material (chopped brush or other coarse materials) on soil to allow air circulation around base of pile.

• Alternate layers of greens (nitrogen) and browns (carbon) around 3” - 6.”

• After each green/brown layer, add up to 1” of an activator such as garden soil or compost. Activators like dried manure, coffee grounds, bone/blood/horn/fish meal or urea fertilizer will provide nitrogen to encourage reproduction of microorganisms.
A Healthy Pile

Keep volume around 3 feet cubed.
Temperature

Most backyard piles are active between 90 and 120 degrees.

131 degrees kills weed seeds and pathogens.
Moisture
50 % water
Feels like a wrung out sponge
Oxygen

Turn, stir or fluff up to create porous areas for living creatures.
Compost Ingredients

**Do’s**
- Leaves
- Grass clippings
- Plants
- Nuts
- Straw, hay
- Fruits, vegetables and grains
- Egg shells
- Coffee or tea grounds
- Sawdust
- Lint
- Shredded paper

**Don’ts**
- Meats
- Dairy Products
- Oil
- Bones
- Cat and dog droppings
- Cat litter
- Diseased plants
- Ashes from coal or Charcoal
- Branches or limbs
- Quick lime (hydrated...
The Mixture

30% Green or nitrogen containing organic matter supplies protein.
Vegetables, fruits, flowers, plant clippings, grass clippings, coffee grinds, manure, etc…

70% Brown or carbon based organic matter supplies energy in carbohydrates.
Dead leaves, straw, sawdust, wood chips, shredded newspaper, corn stalks, cotton rags, nut shells, pine needles, etc…
Balanced Diet
Location

Need a level and well drained area  Sunny Spot
Location

Keep accessible and discrete

Build pile over lawn or soil
Keeping The Pile Active As Weather Cools

Put A Lid On It

Block Freezing Winds
It’s Working When

• When the pile heats up.

• When materials no longer look like the original stuff you put in the pile.

• Has little to no smell beside an earthy one.
Increase Decomposition

• Aerate it

• Check moisture level

• Maintain neutral pH

• Sniff and solve problems
THANK YOU!
Visit CuyahogaRecycles.org to learn more about reducing, reusing and recycling at home, at work and in the community.

The Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District is the leading resource in Cuyahoga County for information, expertise and programs that support sustainable materials management and reduce the environmental impact of waste.

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Questions