

## What is Composting ?

Composting is the natural decomposition process during which organic materials (kitchen scraps, grass and leaves) break down and create a nutrient-rich soil amendment called humus. Composting is nature's way of recycling.

## Why Compost?

Home composting allows you to manage your yard waste on your own property by turning it into a useful end product called humus. It is also an effective way to cut down on the amount of trash that you put at the curb. The kitchen scraps that you would normally throw away can be combined with your leaves and other yard debris to make a wonderful, natural fertilizer.

### Do Compost:

Vegetable Scraps  
Citrus rinds  
Egg Peanut and nut shells  
Horse manure  
Vines  
Apple cores  
Lettuce leaves  
Garden clippings  
Leave  
Vines  
Bark  
Weeds\*\*

*\*Weeds should only be added to a hot pile.*

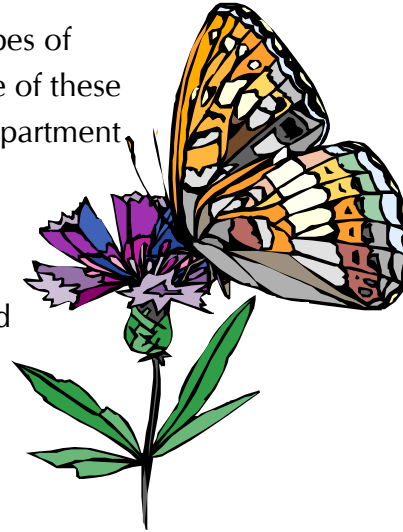
### Do Not Compost:

Meat  
Fat  
Bones  
Poultry  
Fish  
Dairy products



## Please Visit our Home Composting Demonstration Site Located Behind the Galloway Post Office

Here you will see several types of compost bins at work. Some of these are available through the Department of Community Education. Our beautiful butterfly and bird gardens are testimony to the richness of the finished compost !



## Free Workshops are given throughout the Spring, Summer and Fall.

**Watch the Municipal signboard & G-TV for announcements.**

For Further Information , contact the  
GALLOWAY TOWNSHIP  
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION  
300 E. Jimmie Leeds Roads, Galloway, NJ 08205  
652-9265

## GALLOWAY TOWNSHIP Guide to Home Composting



# What's Next?

You need to select a place in your yard that is appropriate for composting. This should be a spot that receives equal amounts of sun and shade throughout the day. Then, you should choose what to compost in...if anything. Many ready-made bins are available, so you can either purchase a unit, build your own, or just build a pile. You decide.



## Arranging Your Bin or Pile

In order for the materials to efficiently break down, you need to mix an equal amount of “brown”, (carbon) materials and “green” (nitrogen) materials. Shredding larger pieces will speed up the decomposition process. Water is important, but usually rain is sufficient. Air is very important—the pile should be aerated by turning on a regular basis; especially when the weather is hot.

### A Sample “Recipe”

6 parts	Dry Leaves	Browns
3 parts	Food Scraps	Greens
3 parts	Fresh Grass Clippings	Greens

*ADD: Rainwater and an occasional turning*

## Some Helpful Hints:

- ≈ Black plastic bins make faster compost than an open pile
- ≈ Cover an open pile with black plastic film to speed up decomposition.
- ≈ In lieu of turning a pile, you can drive rods in and out to make air passages.
- ≈ If you don’t add meat or dairy products you shouldn’t attract pests.
- ≈ If your pile has an odor, it contains too many nitrogen-producing materials and is not getting enough air. Sprinkle garden lime sparingly...then balance your materials by adding high carbon material such as leaves or wood chips.
- ≈ Ventilating the pile will also ward off odors.
- ≈ If compost is soggy, take steps to let it dry out...it should just be moist.
- ≈ If compost is dry, add a little water as you turn the pile. Adding more wet, green materials will keep the pile from drying out.

## When is the Compost Finished ?

Your compost is ready when the materials you placed in your pile have a sweet, clean aroma. You can use the finished compost in a variety of ways: In vegetable gardens it is a source of non-toxic fertilizer; in flower gardens, mulching with compost helps to hold the moisture in the soil. Lawns built with compost will drain better and demand less water. Applying a ring of compost around a tree will help to feed its root system.

## Grass Clipping “Cut it and Leave it” Program

The best thing you can do for your lawn is to leave the grass clippings on it. By doing this, you achieve several things:

- ≈ You return nitrogen to the lawn
- ≈ You save precious time by not bagging
- ≈ You save money by not having to add commercial chemical fertilizers
- ≈ You save money on disposal
- ≈ You lower the water requirements of the lawn
- ≈ In combination with composting, you greatly reduce the amount of trash entering our landfills.

### The Process:

A mulching mower is ideal, as it grinds the clippings into a fine spray that filters down through the lawn; however, a regular mower can be used if you mow more frequently. Even with a mulching mower, you should only mow the top third of the lawn, leaving the blade a length of 2-3 inches. The longer length keeps the lawn healthier, and the taller grass will shade the soil, cooling roots and limiting weeds. (Yes, believe it or not, weeds grow slower than turf grass!).

### What About Thatch ?

Lawn experts agree that grass clippings will not contribute to thatch problems. Thatch is formed by the accumulation of dead roots and stems. The more you fertilize and water your lawn, the faster it grows and the faster thatch accumulates.

