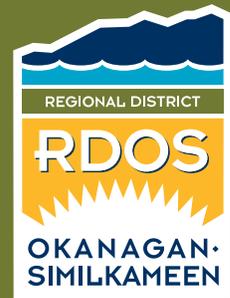


5 easy steps to composting



Composting can be easy.
Follow these steps to make hassle free, plant loving compost.

1 USE WIRE MESH TO KEEP OUT RODENTS
Local building supply stores sell wire mesh. Use 1/2 inch or smaller (your finger shouldn't get through). Place under compost bins and secure around any holes.



2 ADD LOTS AND LOTS OF LEAVES
Leaves break down naturally into compost. The more leaves you have in your pile, the less odours and better compost. Keep extra leaves for winter and summer (see 3 below).



3 PLACE FRUITS AND VEGETABLES UNDER LEAVES
Place fruits and vegetables under leaves in your compost bin. A layer of leaves keeps odours down and reduces fruit flies. Either lift up leaves or place fresh leaves on top. Avoid composting any cooked foods, meat, fish, bread and cheese as they can be smelly and create problems.

4 POKE YOUR PILE WITH A STICK
The bacteria and bugs in compost need air to breathe. Digging or poking holes into your compost pile will keep it aerated. A broken hockey stick (shaft with blade broken off) works great.



5 WATER YOUR COMPOST PILE
In the dry Okanagan-Similkameen, lack of water is the main reason why compost breaks down slowly. Water regularly to speed up the process.



GRASS CLIPPINGS PROBLEMS

Unlike leaves, grass clippings can bind up. This blocks air and water in the pile. Mulch grass back into lawns as much as possible. Contact the RDOS to learn more about 'Grasscycling'.

WHAT MATERIALS CAN BE COMPOSTED?

GREEN MATERIALS (NITROGEN-RICH)

- Fruits and vegetables
- Coffee grounds/tea bags/egg shells
- Fresh grass clippings (see below)
- Green plant trimmings
- Weeds that have not gone to seed

BROWN MATERIALS (CARBON-RICH)

- Dry brown leaves and plants (see #2 and #3)
- Dry brown grass clippings (see below)
- Vegetable stalks
- Ripped up newspaper or paper bags

WHAT CANNOT BE COMPOSTED?

- Anything that would attract pests like meat, bones, greasy foods and oils
- Grain products
- Cooked food scraps
- Dog or cat feces

Seasons of Composting

Spring

Mix any uncovered fruits and vegetables with leaves. Collect leaves for spring, summer and early fall. Add water to restart compost and poke the pile to add air. Remove any finished compost.

Summer

Bury all uncooked fruits and vegetables under leaves to avoid odour and fruit flies. Add water regularly to keep your pile going in our hot summer!

Fall

Collect leaves! Get enough to last through winter into spring. Remove all finished compost and place in garden areas. The compost will help protect the soil and add nutrients back in. It will also create room in your compost bin as materials break down slowly in winter.

Winter

Ensure 1/2 inch wire mesh covers any openings on bottom or sides. Rodents will be looking for a warm, dry place to nest. Keep adding materials! Things will break down quickly when everything thaws.

How to use finished compost

- If purchasing compost check the label or ask the retailer for application recommendations.
- Finished compost looks like soil. Screen your compost and put uncomposted materials back in your bin. Any extra 1/2 inch wire mesh makes a great screen.
- Place compost on top of the soil around plants. This is called top dressing. Compost will naturally move into the soil. The best time to add compost is in the fall to prepare your garden and lawn for spring.
- Add up to 30% compost into potting soil or top dress house plants.

EXTRA THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

- Place newspaper or brown paper around your kitchen collection bin to reduce any residue (“the ick factor”). Newspaper ink is okay to compost but office paper ink can cause problems so should be avoided.
- If you have space, keep your fruit and vegetable scraps in the freezer. This will reduce any odours, kill fruit flies and freezing helps break down materials. Chopped up materials will also compost faster.
- Never add soil. Soil stops air getting in, slowing the composting process. Leaves add all the beneficial bacteria and other critters you need for composting.
- The creatures in your compost bin are a lot like you. If they don’t have enough water, they will not survive. Add water regularly throughout the year to keep your compost going.
- Bring additional yard waste to local landfills for free composting up to 500 kg per load.



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

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