Benefits of Composting

- Reduces the amount of trash in the landfill
- Returns nutrients to the soil
- Natural fertilizer
- Compost suppresses weed growth
- Increases water retention (less irrigation)
- Reduces soil and plant diseases
- Helps control erosion
- Helps rainwater percolate into the ground

What do I do if...?

Q: My compost smells?
A: Turn it and add more browns.

Q: My compost is dry?
A: Turn it, add water, wait. Repeat.

Q: My compost is too wet?
A: Turn it and add more browns.

Pinellas Community Compost
CHANGING THE HABITS OF A GENERATION

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The Earth thanks you for returning the organic nutrients back to the soil. They will help support new life as a valuable part of the natural ecosystem.

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CHANGING THE HABITS OF A GENERATION

Composting Basics

Your easy-to-follow guide to backyard composting

How to Compost

1: Select a System

- Closed container like a tumbler
- Open bin or pile
- Worm bin

2: Gather Your Browns

- Browns are your key to successful composting.
- They form your base and the lid.
- The browns cover your food scraps to prevent odors and pests.

3: Save Food Scraps (Greens)

- Fruits, vegetables and grains are easily composted.
- Avoid meat, dairy and oils.
- You can store them in your freezer until you're ready to take outside to compost OR collect them in a bin on the counter and take out daily.
- Always cover food scraps with brown materials

4: Build your pile

- Start with several inches of browns on the bottom
- Add your green materials
- Cover with more browns so you can't see or smell the food scraps
- Continue layering until it's about full
- A tumbler should be 3/4 full to leave room for air

5: Water

Compost needs to be moist to break down.
Test it by squeezing a handful. It should be moist like a damp sponge. Too wet? Add more browns. Too dry? Add more water.

6: Turning

Your compost is broken down by tiny organisms that need to breathe. Turning the pile once every week or two helps them stay healthy.

- Turn a tumbler once a week, after adding food scraps. Then cover with more browns until there is no visible food waste. Continue turning it but don't add any more browns or greens
- Turn an open pile every week or two. Cover it with new browns until there's no food waste visible

7: It's Done...

- When there are no visible food scraps.
- When the compost doesn't feel warmer than the morning air temperature outside
- When the carbon is mostly broken down.

This can take anywhere between 3 months and a year.

What to Compost

GREENS (nitrogen):

- Fruit and vegetable scraps
- Overripe or moldy produce
- Stale cereal, crackers and bread
- Grass clippings
- Coffee grounds
- Egg shells

BROWNS (carbon):

- dried leaves
- tree mulch
- sticks, branches
- white paper
- brown cardboard

60% browns
40% greens

FAQs

- Compost should not be stinky
- Compost should not attract insects or pests
- Finished compost can be added to gardens, trees, shrubs, potted plants and lawns