



# Composting in Charlottesville

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## WHAT IS COMPOSTING?

Composting is an excellent way to recycle your kitchen and garden waste. Nature's own method of waste disposal and soil fertilization, composting is performed by naturally occurring bacteria, fungi, and insects that break down organic materials into a fine, nutrient-rich, dark, dirt-like matter called compost. Compost can be used as a mulch or be mixed into soil, improving the soil texture, retaining moisture, restricting weed growth, and acting as a fertilizer.

## WHY COMPOST?

### Reduce Landfill Waste:

Approximately 1/3 of household waste is typically made up of organic materials that can be composted, instead of landfilled.



**Preserve Nutrients:** Compost enriches soils and gardens, thereby keeping nutrients in the growing cycle and working for us. Composting produces nitrogen, potassium, and phosphorus naturally, eliminating the need for additional, expensive fertilizers which can have a detrimental effect on the environment.

## HOW TO COMPOST?

Regardless of where you live, composting options exist that can be easy to manage, clean, and reduce the amount of your trash.

If you have yard or garden space, you can set up an outdoor composting bin yourself (check online for tutorials!) or buy one. If you don't, the City offers drop-off locations or commercial composting services can pick up your compostable materials and return the finished compost material to you (or allow you to donate it).

Turn over for more information about **GETTING STARTED.**



# Composting at Home

## Composting is as Easy as 1 - 2 - 3 !

- 1. Collect** food scraps while cooking
- 2. Store** your scraps in a container with a lid or cover until ready to take outside.

*Tip: Use the freezer for longer storage without smells*

- 3. Move** scraps weekly to your outdoor compost pile or curbside/drop-off location

*Tip: For drop-off sites, line the container with a compostable bag to keep clean and avoid spills*



## Backyard Composting

- ◇ Buy/Build a composting bin.
- ◇ Mix browns (leaves, twigs) and greens (kitchen scraps, grass clippings).
- ◇ Keep pests away: Don't include meats, oils, or bones.
- ◇ Cover food scraps with leaves or grass clippings. Cover the bin.
- ◇ As needed, add water to keep moist.
- ◇ Dark, rich material at the bottom of your pile is ready-to-use compost. Usually takes 2 mo. to 2 yrs.

## Curbside/Drop-Off

Unlike backyard composting, commercial composting services can process cooking oils, animal/dairy products, certified compostable packaging, and uncoated paper (napkins/towels).

- ◆ Curbside pick up is available locally (for a fee)
- ◆ Charlottesville has multiple drop-off sites available

Commercial composting services can pick up your compostable materials and return the finished compost material to you, or perhaps allow you to donate it.