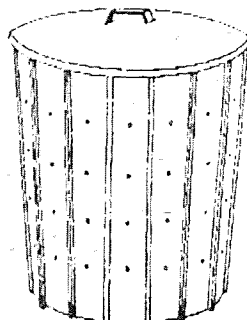
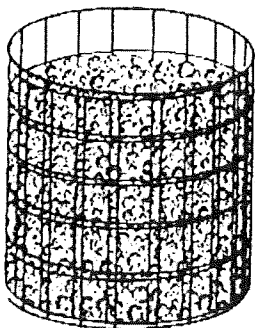
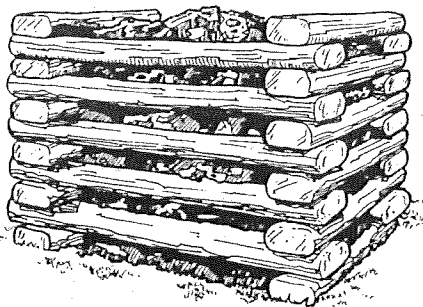
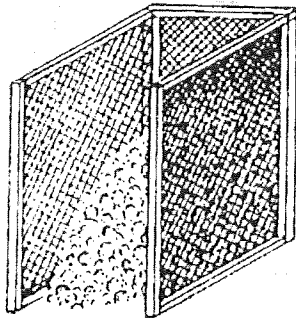


COMPOSTING

Containers For Compost

Compost can be made in an open pile, but a container keeps things more organized. Garbage cans or oil drums can be utilized. Punch holes into the sides and bottom to provide ventilation. A wire mesh cylinder or frame can also be used. Wooden boxes can be built to hold compost. Size depends on individual needs. Construct your box with air holes in the sides to allow for air penetration. Leave one side and/or top open for easy access. Units ranging from simple wire frames, to plastic models which can be turned by hand can be purchased as well.



Recipe for Good Compost

Compost can be made quicker and more efficiently by layering material so that there is a good ratio of nitrogen to carbon. Alternating materials high in carbon such as sawdust, leaves, straw or wood shavings with those high in nitrogen like fresh grass clippings, vegetable wastes or manure will result in usable compost much faster.

An ideal ratio is two parts nitrogen to one part carbon. Fertilizers such as Blood and Bone Meal, or a compost "activator" like **Rot-It** can be added to decrease decomposition time. Remember to turn the pile regularly to allow air to enter. You can also poke holes into the pile. Keep the compost moist, but not too wet. Moisten each layer as it is added. The amount of turning you do will determine how quickly compost is made. If conditions are ideal it could be as little as several weeks. If material is simply piled up as it is produced, the bottom of the pile will be composted in twelve to eighteen months.

SAWDUST
LEAVES
KITCHEN WASTES
LIVESTOCK MANURE
GARDEN DEBRIS
KITCHEN WASTES
DRY LEAVES

Home Composting

Composting can help the gardener achieve two objectives. It can cut down on the amount of household and yard waste that goes into our landfills, and it converts this material into rich organic matter that improves your garden soil.

Organic matter improves sandy soils by adding water and nutrient-holding capacity, and helps to break up clay soils, creating space for air, water and nutrients. Healthy plants depend on good soil.

Composting is a simple way to achieve better soil. You don't need much space or time, and the basic process is very straight forward.

What Can Be Composted

Almost anything from the yard can be composted. Leaves, grass clippings, weeds, flower and vegetable plant remains and prunings are a few of the more readily available materials. Thicker materials will decompose faster if chopped or shredded first. Egg shells, peelings and coffee grounds can be separated in the kitchen and added to the pile. Meat, bones or fatty foods should not be used however. They are slow to break down and can attract hungry animals.

How To Use Compost

Compost will be dark and crumbly when it is ready to use, and will have an "earthy" smell. Using a screen to eliminate bigger pieces which are not completely decomposed will leave you with a fine material which can be easily spread onto the garden. Lay about two or three inches on top of the soil and work in well. Use no more than about one pound of compost per square foot in the garden.

COMMON COMPOST PROBLEMS

SYMPTOM	PROBLEM	SOLUTION
Compost pile has a bad odour	Not enough air, pile too wet	Turn it, add coarse, dry material [straw, corn stalks]
Pile is dry throughout	Not enough water, too much woody material	Turn it and moisten materials, add fresh wastes; cover pile
Compost pile is damp and warm in middle but nowhere else	Pile is too small	Collect more material and mix the old ingredients into a new pile
Pile is damp and sweet-smelling but still will not heat up	Lack of nitrogen	Mix in a nitrogen source like fresh grass clippings, fresh manure, bloodmeal, or ammonium sulfate
Pest infestation - dogs, rodents, insects	Improper food scraps added	Don't add meat, fats, bones or other animal wastes. Use a rodent-proof compost bin
	Food scraps not covered	Place fruit and vegetable wastes in the centre of the pile, cover with soil



Art Knapp

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RECYCLED PAPER