

Troubleshooting

Foul odor: Pile is too wet, or not receiving enough oxygen.

Solution: Turn pile to add oxygen, mix in dry brown material if too wet.

Pests: Food remains are attracting flies and/or animals to the pile.

Solution: Do not add meats and fats to the pile, bury food waste in centre of pile, increase pile temperature by turning often to kill fly larvae.

Low Pile Temperature: Pile is too small, too dry.

Solution: Add more material to pile, add water if necessary, add more green material.

Nothing Happening: Not enough moisture, oxygen, and/or green material.

Solution: Add green material along with more water, and turn the pile frequently.

BACKYARD composting



Columbia Shuswap
Regional District
555 Harbourfront Dr. NE
Box 978 Salmon Arm BC
V1E 4P1

p. 250.833.5950
t.f. 1.800.248.2773
f. 250.832.3375
www.csr.d.bc.ca

Columbia Shuswap Regional District
555 Harbourfront Dr NE
Box 978 Salmon Arm BC
V1E 4P1

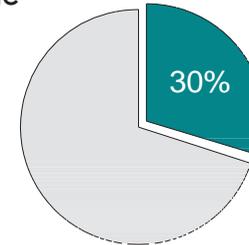


What is composting?

Composting is the natural breakdown (decomposition) of organic materials (such as yard and garden waste and kitchen scraps) into a nutrient rich soil that can be used to create and maintain a healthy garden.

Why should I?

Over 30% of all material entering the Columbia Shuswap Regional District (CSR.D) Landfills is organic material. By using a home composting system, you can help save valuable space in our landfills.



The slow, anaerobic decomposition of organics in a landfill emits methane, a greenhouse gas. The aerobic decomposition that happens in your home composter does not.

You can use your finished compost on your lawn and garden, instead of buying costly fertilizers and other potentially harmful soil additives.

Compost recipe

A healthy compost requires a mix of materials that contribute nitrogen and carbon to the pile. The addition of water, oxygen, heat and microorganisms makes compost happen!

- **Carbon sources-often referred to as the Brown Material** includes: dead leaves, woody material, dried grass or straw, shredded paper and cardboard;
- **Nitrogen Sources-referred to as Green Material** includes: fresh grass clippings, fruit and veggie remains, livestock manure;
- **Water:** the organisms that make compost need a warm, moist environment. The material in your compost should feel as damp as a wrung out sponge. Too much or too little moisture can affect the composting process; and
- **Oxygen:** a well aerated pile helps speed the decomposition process, and eliminate odors.

4 Steps to Success

1. Find a location

- Select a convenient location with easy access;
- Determine what type of system you will use: open pile or enclosed bin; and
- Locate the pile on level ground, preferably in a sunny location.

2. Build the pile

- Form a base of twigs or wood chips to help aerate the pile; and
- Add material in layers of brown and green material to a size of 1 cubic yard (3' by 3' by 3').

3. Maintain the pile

- Continue adding a mixture of brown and green materials to the centre of the pile;
- Mix the pile often to aerate the material, speed the decomposition and eliminate odors; and
- Ensure that the moisture of the pile is similar to that of a wrung out sponge-add water if too dry, or dry material (such as dead leaves) if too wet.

4. Harvesting

- Mature compost should be ready in 3 to 6 months, depending on how the compost was maintained;

- Compost will smell earthy, be a dark brown color, and have a crumbly texture; and
- Place compost on lawns or in flower beds or planters as a great soil amendment.

Choose your method

The simplest way is to create a pile on the ground. Alternatively, you may decide to use chicken wire, construct a bin, or buy any of the commercially available bins and tumblers. You should commit an area at least 3' by 3' for whatever system you choose.

Compost heap: Great for managing lots of yard and garden debris. The size of pile needed may vary greatly. A pile should not be less than 3'x3'x3'. Anything smaller is too small to decompose properly. Large piles work more efficiently, but are more difficult to manage. Remember that it should be turned at least once a month. Two or three smaller piles may be more effective than a large one, if you have the space.

Compost bin: Enclosing your compost in a structure or bin helps keep

What stays out?



your material in one place, speeds up the decomposition process, and can help discourage pests from frequenting your compost, especially if you are adding kitchen scraps. Plastic bins can be purchased commercially, but you can also build your own. Enclosures made of chicken wire, bricks, or scrap lumber will work well also, just remember to include an opening to facilitate turning your compost periodically, and leave enough space along the sides of the bin to promote air flow.

What goes in?



Compost heap



Compost bin