YOUR GUIDE TO BACKYARD COMPOSTING

WHAT IS COMPOSTING?
Composting is the process of turning kitchen and yard waste into usable, nutrient rich soil through natural decomposition. Inside the composter, organic waste is broken down through a controlled process by microorganisms. By utilizing the correct material, these microorganisms will create a soil product that is incredibly nutrient dense and great for your garden plants.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF COMPOSTING?
• Diverts food and yard waste from the landfill, leading to reduced greenhouse gas emissions
• Creates an enriched soil which can be used in your garden
• Suppresses plant diseases and pests
• Saves you money by reducing the need for chemical fertilizer

WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH COMPOST?
• Amend your garden soil by working compost into it
• Sprinkle compost on your lawn to foster healthy and robust soil top-dressing
• Improve the soil around trees and shrubs by spreading compost near the base of the tree trunk

WHERE SHOULD YOU PUT YOUR BACKYARD COMPOSTER?
• Place The Earth Machine on exposed soil in a dry, shady or moderately sunny spot that is near a source of clean water.
• Use the four provided plastic screws to secure the backyard composter to the ground.
• Make sure it’s convenient to get to the composter, as you’ll be taking your food waste out often!

A typical household throws away approximately 474 pounds of food waste per year, or 1.3 pounds per person per day.
Composting requires a mix of nitrogen and carbon to create the proper environment for decomposition. Green waste such as food scraps, bring nitrogen whereas brown waste, leaves and paper products, add carbon to the mix.

**WHAT CAN I COMPOST?**

**GREEN**
- Fruit and vegetables
- Crushed egg shells
- Coffee grounds and filters
- Grass clippings
- Houseplants

**BROWN**
- Shredded cardboard
- Nuts, shells, bread, grains
- Shredded black and white newspaper
- Yard trimmings, leaves
- Dryer & vacuum cleaner lint
- Hay, straw, wood chips
- Shredded cotton & wool rags
- Hair and fur

**“NO” LIST**
- Meat, Bones
- Fats, grease, lard, oils
- Dairy (butter, milk, eggs)
- Diseased plants
- Charcoal ashes
- Toxic materials
- Nonbiodegradable materials
- Cat or dog waste, litter
**HOW DO I COMPOST?**
Beginning a home composting project can be easy, fun and educational by following a few simple steps:

1. **WASTE TREATMENT**
   Chop, shred or tear items into smaller pieces. This will help speed up the decomposition process.

2. **KITCHEN COLLECTION**
   Line your container with newspaper to soak up liquids, and when you empty the bin into the composter the newspaper can go along with it!

3. **EMPTY INTO COMPOSTER**
   Whenever the bin is full, simply empty the container with the newspaper into The Earth Machine.

4. **ADD YARD WASTE**
   Cover fresh food waste with a layer of leaves, other dry yard trimmings, or soil.

5. **ADD WATER**
   Your compost should be the moisture of a wrung-out sponge.

6. **STIR AND HARVEST**
   Periodically stir the container to aerate the compost and encourage decomposition. After a few months, the soil will be ready for harvest.

**STEPS FOR COMPOSTING**

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**HOW DO I HARVEST THE SOIL?**
Compost can be harvested after about 4 to 6 months. You’ll know it’s ready when the soil is a crumbly moist texture and gives off an earthy aroma.

**SMALL HARVESTING**
Use the harvest door at the base of The Earth Machine and remove as much soil as you need using a shovel or garden trowel.

**LARGE HARVESTING**
If you would like to access the whole pile, simply unscrew the four anchoring screws and lift the container over the pile. Place any large and intact food scraps back in The Earth Machine to begin the next composting cycle.

**TROUBLESHOOTING YOUR PILE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROBLEM</th>
<th>CAUSE</th>
<th>SOLUTION</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rotten egg smell</td>
<td>Insufficient air or too much moisture</td>
<td>Turn pile and incorporate coarse browns (sawdust, leaves)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ammonia smell</td>
<td>Too much nitrogen</td>
<td>Incorporate coarse browns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pile does not heat up or decomposes slowly</td>
<td>Pile too small</td>
<td>Add more organic matter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Insufficient moisture</td>
<td>Turn pile and add water</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of nitrogen</td>
<td>Incorporate food waste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not enough air</td>
<td>Turn pile</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cold weather</td>
<td>Increase pile size of insulate</td>
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The City of Orlando uses single stream recycling, so put all of your recyclables into the cart! Large boxes can get stuck and cause recycling to stay in your cart. Break boxes down so they come out of the cart easily. **Items accepted:**

- Steel, Tin & Aluminum Cans
- Plastic Bottles & Containers #1-5, 7
- Office Paper, Brown Paper Bags, Newspapers
- Paper Cardboard, Dairy & Juice Containers
- Flattened Cardboard & Paperboard
- Junk Mail & Magazines

Keep food waste, plastic bags, polystyrene foam cups & containers, aluminum pans and other plastic film out of the recycling cart. Plastic bags harm recycling machinery, empty the recycling directly into the cart.