

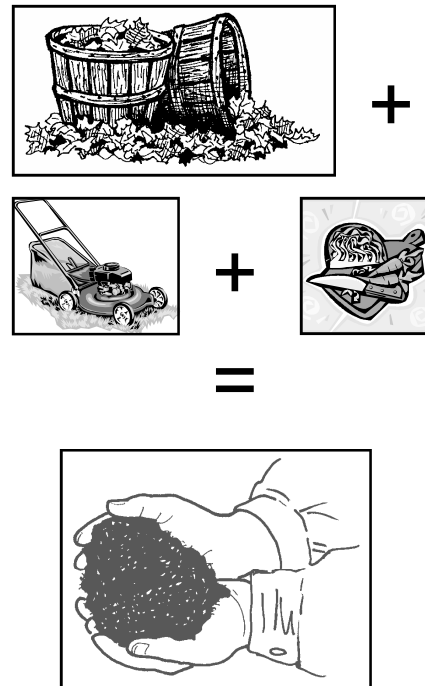
**WSU Lewis County Master
Recycler Composters**

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**REDUCE REUSE
RECYCLE**

**Keys to
successful
home
composting**



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(360) 740-1212

Getting the Right Mix

Organic materials: A good mix consists of three parts "browns" (materials such as dead leaves that are high in carbon) and one part "greens" (such as fresh grass clippings and garden prunings that are high in nitrogen).



Moisture: Composting materials should feel moist but not overly soggy.

Temperature: Compost should feel warm to the touch except in the cold winter months.

Air: To prevent unpleasant odors that can occur when materials decompose without oxygen, compost should be turned regularly to ensure that air is reaching the center of the pile.



High Carbon "Browns"	High Nitrogen "Greens"	Sources of Composting Organisms
Leaves	Grass	Old compost
Dead plants	Green plant clippings	Soil
Straw	Manure	Cow manure
Shredded paper	Alfalfa or clover	Chicken manure
Shredded twigs	Seaweed or pond algae	Horse manure
Pine needles	Non-meat and non-dairy kitchen scraps	Commercially available compost starters
Sawdust from untreated wood		



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Fine Tuning Compost

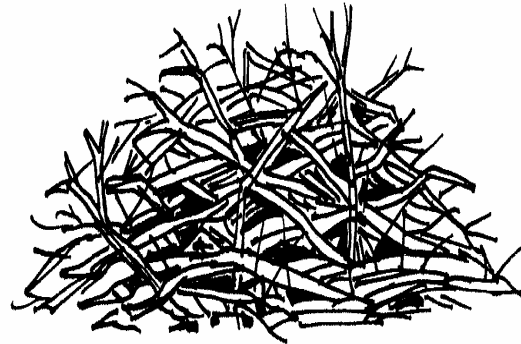
Problem	Solution
Compost is too wet and soggy	Turn and add dry material; cover compost
Compost is dry and appears dusty	Turn and water; shade compost
Compost is cool to the touch	Turn and add high nitrogen "green"

Don't Compost

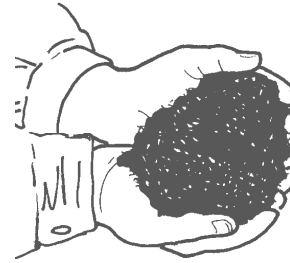
- Diseased plants or leaves
- Persistent weeds (blackberries, multi-flora rose canes, bindweed, quack-grass, etc.)
- Human or pet feces.
- Meat, dairy products and kitchen vegetables cooked with animal fats.
- Plants that have gone to seed.

Brush and Woody Waste

Trimmings from bushes and shrubs are usually not suitable for composting. Home chippers can be used to grind small branches and prunings for mulch, ornamental landscaping or garden pathways. Old Christmas trees and similar brush may also be left in a secluded part of your yard to attract birds and serve as a natural wildlife habitat.



Using Compost



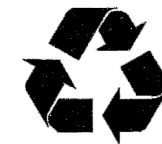
Compost is ready to be used when it looks dark and crumbly and none of the starting ingredients are visible. One way to test if your compost is finished is to seal a small sample in a plastic bag for 24 to 48 hours. If no strong odors are released when you open the bag, the compost is done.

Compost can be applied directly around the base of trees and shrubs to serve as a mulch. Mulch should be close to, but not touching, the base of the tree or shrub. It can also be worked into the top six to eight

inches of the soil to provide increased water retention and valuable nutrients.



WSU Lewis County Master Recycler Composters is a volunteer organization committed to public education about reducing, reusing and recycling waste to reduce impacts of waste on energy use, air and water quality, landfills and the environment. Training is held twice a year and is open to anyone who is committed to these goals. Contact us at the WSU Extension office for more information or to register for the next training session.



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