

Composting is a great way to turn your everyday organic materials into nutrient-rich soil for your garden.

Who is composting for?

Anyone can compost. Composting can be done on a small scale or a large scale.

Once you understand the concept of composting, you can make a compost bin out of just about anything.

How does composting work?

There are trillions of microorganisms in the soil that aid in the decomposition process. Like earthworms, these microorganisms consume and expel organic matter in a nutrient-rich form that is suitable for plants to take up.

Add organic material (such as leaves, decaying animals, and food scraps) to the soil to feed the trillions of microscopic organisms that live there.

Value of Organic Matter in the Soil

Organic matter improves the soil's moisture and nutrient retention, reduces runoff and erosion, and increases the health of plants.

What to Compost?

Almost any plant or organic material may be used to produce compost.

Some examples of compostable materials include: Leaves, lawn clippings, weeds, garden refuse and kitchen wastes, seaweed, wood shavings, sawdust, and tree bark.

Green materials such as legumes, lawn clippings, and green corn have higher nitrogen content, causing them to decompose more rapidly than dry, mature plant residues.

How to start composting?

If you want to compost in a container, choose a 5-gallon bucket or 50-gallon trash can. Drill large holes in the bottom to serve as drainage holes as well

as an entry for beneficial microbes to make their way into your compost bin.

To compost in the ground, simply dig a hole and bury your food scraps.

How to maintain a compost bin?

Maintain a healthy balance by using a good mix of soil, brown matter, green matter, food scraps, and moisture.

As you notice the top layer rotting and decomposing, flip the soil a few times with your shovel.

You will probably see insects and flies in your compost bin, which is ok. You can control the number of critters by making sure the food scraps are covered with soil, leaves, and organic matter.

Too much food will attract flies, turn rancid, smell bad, and breed mold and fungus. If there is too much food in your bin, consider adding leaves, twigs, soil, and/or grass clippings.

Too much water will cause the soil to become unhealthy and anaerobic. If your bin is waterlogged, flip it with a shovel while adding dry organic matter such as leaves, plant cuttings, and/or twigs.

Not enough food and water will cause the soil to dry out, losing its capacity to store nutrients and minerals. If this is the case, add more food scraps and water.

