

Composters\_2004.txt

From: Deanna  
Date: Mon Apr 21, 2003 3:42 pm  
Subject: Re: {OHG}composters

What kind of materials do you have to compost, Tracie and what do you want to use the compost for?

There are lots of different methods and lots of different composters on the market and some that you can build, easily, yourself. There are a few things to remember to make compost work quickly and efficiently in 1 to 3 months.

1. Aeration Turn the compost every 3 days.
2. Moisture level 45 - 60 percent, consistency of a wrung out sponge
3. Volume 3'x3'x3'
4. Particle size 1-2" diameter at largest point
5. Carbon:Nitrogen ratio 30:1 C:N or browns and greens or 1:1 by volume

Turning the pile every 3 days will cause it to decompose quickly, but turning it more often will slow it down because fungi and aminomycdetes populations can't grow quickly enough to do their job.

Moisture allows the working microbes to move through the pile and enables the microbes to function.

Volume is important because the pile grows hotter in the middle and needs to be insulated by the pile. Also a huge pile is really hard to turn.

Particle size - well a tree stump will take 20+ years to decompose but grass clippings may disappear in 24 hours. 1-2" is really the best size. Smaller than that and the pile may compact making it harder for the microbes to work.

C:N Ratio. If this is balances, 30:1 or 1:1 by volume things will happen much more quickly.

All the above is the ideal, but you can work with what you have. Some folks use a pile - me for instance- and others get the ready made item. They all work if you work to follow the above steps.

You might check with your County Extension Office. That's where I found out about the Master Composter/Recycler course, which I'm taking right now.

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Another good idea is to find out about Vermiculture and I know there are folks here that can tell you about that. Makes great stuff for the garden.

Deanna