

# SPREAD A LITTLE GOOD... COMPOST!

**CONGRATULATIONS!**  
Welcome to the world of composting.



## GET READY, GET SET...

### 1. LOCATION. LOCATION. LOCATION.

Select a level area for your bin with good water drainage. A partially shaded spot is best. Keep your bin 20-30 cm (8"-12") away from walls, fences, bushes, plants and openings to your home.

2. Before you place your bin on the ground, loosen the soil so it is sitting in the dirt.

3. Once your bin is in place, put a 10-15 cm (4"-6") layer of dead plants.

4. Follow the **COMPOSTING 3-STEP** and enjoy!

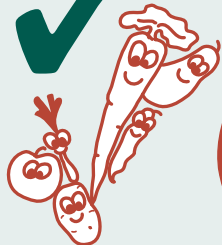
## THE COMPOSTING 3-STEP

**1. MATERIALS** Always feed your bin equal amounts of **GREENS** (materials high in nitrogen) and **BROWNS** (materials high in carbon). See the YES & NO chart below for a complete list. When adding new materials to your bin, start with a layer of **BROWNS** first, then add a layer of **GREENS**. Top **GREENS** with a 2-3 cm (1") layer of soil or finished compost. Always dig your food scraps in the center of the pile, under the other materials.

### 2. MOISTURE

Keep your pile as damp as a well-wrung sponge. Check moisture on hot summer or windy days. Sprinkle with water when dry.

**3. AIR** Add air to your pile every 2-3 weeks. Poke holes through the pile with a broom handle or loosen with a garden fork.



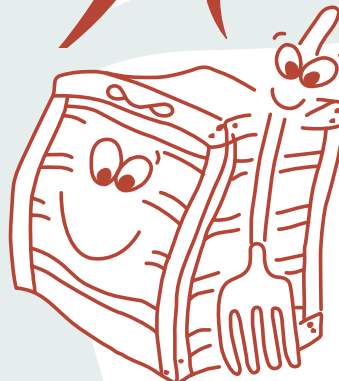
### YES! Compost:

#### GREENS

- ✓ Small amounts of grass clippings
- ✓ Flowers, green plant trimmings & newly fallen leaves
- ✓ Fruit & vegetable peelings
- ✓ Coffee, tea, fruit or vegetable juice
- ✓ Grain or pasta products (no sauces or butter)

#### BROWNS

- ✓ Dried grass clippings & dried leaves
- ✓ Small amounts of woodchips
- ✓ Dryer lint
- ✓ Thin layers of hardwood ash & sawdust
- ✓ Straw



### NO! Never compost:

- ✗ Dairy products
- ✗ Peanut butter or oil-based products
- ✗ Fish, meats, bones, or fats
- ✗ Barbecue charcoal or coal ash
- ✗ Diseased or insect-infested plants
- ✗ Weeds with mature seeds
- ✗ Treated wood products
- ✗ Animal or human waste

# SPREAD THE GOOD

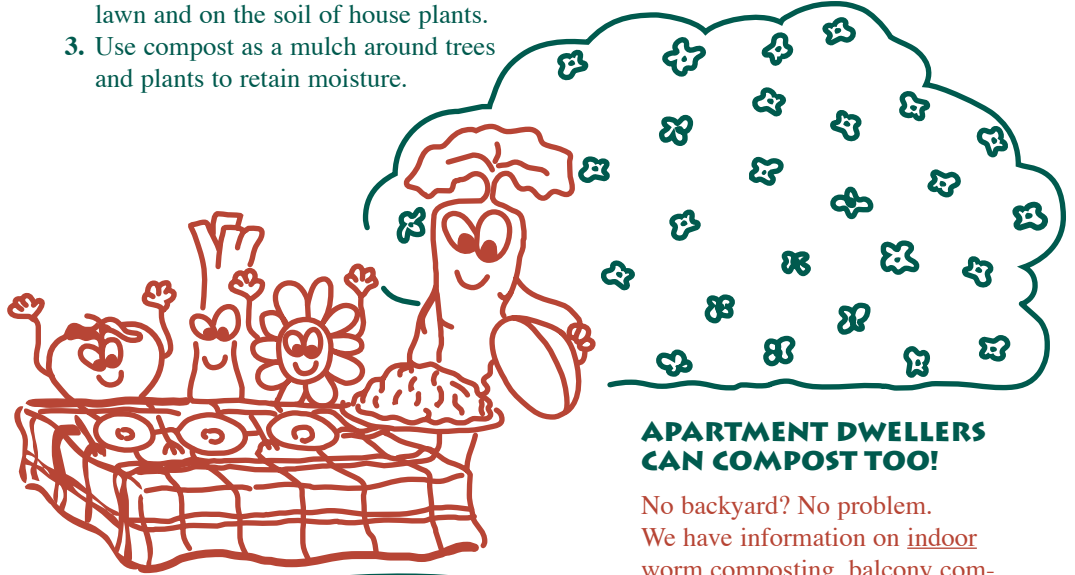
## FINISHED COMPOST: READY OR NOT?

If you properly follow the Composting 3-step, you should have finished compost in 2-3 months. To speed up the composting process, you can chop or shred materials, add air to your pile more often or add a layer of garden soil. Your pile is ready when it no longer has traces of GREENS and BROWNS and is dark brown with an earthy smell. You may find that only the bottom part of your pile is ready to use while the top is still decomposing.

## FINISHED COMPOST: READY OR NOT?

Before you use compost, you may wish to screen it through wire mesh and return any non-composted items to your bin.

1. Dig compost into soil before you plant.
2. Sprinkle screened compost on your lawn and on the soil of house plants.
3. Use compost as a mulch around trees and plants to retain moisture.
4. Mix compost with other potting materials.
5. Give some to a friend.



## APARTMENT DWELLERS CAN COMPOST TOO!

No backyard? No problem. We have information on [indoor worm composting](#), [balcony composting](#) or [community composting](#). Call 311 or see [toronto.ca/compost](http://toronto.ca/compost)

## WINTER COMPOSTING, EH!

A little snow and sub-zero temperatures do not mean an end to composting. Continue to compost as usual but save some fall leaves or dry grass clippings to use throughout the winter. See the [winter composting fact sheet](#).

## ◆◆◆◆◆ TROUBLESHOOTING ◆◆◆◆◆

PROBLEM	PROBABLE CAUSES	SOLUTION
Bad odour	Too many GREENS	Add BROWNS and mix. Turn pile and top with soil.
Smells like rotten eggs	Not enough air or too wet	Turn pile for several days until odour is gone. Top with a thin layer of soil.
Pile is not composting	Too dry	Moisten with water until damp.
Flies around pile	Exposed food	Bury food or cover with a layer of soil.
Unwelcome animal visitors (raccoons, dogs, rodents, etc.)	Exposed foods or wrong items added	Remove any meats, fats or dairy products. Bury food scraps and cover with soil. See the <a href="#">pest-proofing fact sheet</a> .

**COMPOSTER ORDER LINE**  
(in operation April - October)  
416-392-9573

Web Site: [toronto.ca/compost](http://toronto.ca/compost)

