

## Why Compost?



Reduce food waste



Reduce greenhouse gases



Build healthy soil



Improve water holding capacity in soil



Reduce need for chemical fertilizers



Grow your own food



Keep resources local to your community



Compost together to build community

## GET INVOLVED

### Join our growing network of composters!

There's no better way to do so than by volunteering some time processing compost or by educating community members on their composting options.

lacompost.org | @lacompost

### Connect

Follow @lacompost on social media and tag us in your composting photos. You can also use the hashtag #soilandpeople.

### Volunteer

We have volunteer opportunities available for a diverse range of interests and availabilities. More at: [lacompost.org/volunteer](http://lacompost.org/volunteer)

### Drop Off

Dropping off compost at a farmer's market or compost hub is an easy way to reduce your household food waste, connect to your community, and promote healthy soils in LA. More at: [lacompost.org/start-composting](http://lacompost.org/start-composting)

### Learn

Attend a workshop to learn more about the process of composting and how you can start composting at home. Find workshops at [lacompost.org/events](http://lacompost.org/events) and resources at [lacompost.org/resource-library](http://lacompost.org/resource-library)

### Donate

Support our mission by making a donation to LA Compost. More at: [lacompost.org/give](http://lacompost.org/give)



# LA COMPOST

SOIL & PEOPLE

## Compost Guide

### More Composting Tips

[rodaleinstitute.org/education/resources](http://rodaleinstitute.org/education/resources)  
[smartgardening.com](http://smartgardening.com)  
[ilsr.org/composting](http://ilsr.org/composting)

# What Do We Need to Compost?



## Browns (Carbon)

Allows airflow throughout the pile and provides energy for organisms.

- Mulch/wood chips
- Dead leaves (brown leaf)
- Sawdust (from untreated wood)
- Twigs (break into 2-3" pieces)
- Newspaper and shredded paper
- Unbleached paper towels and napkins

## Greens (Nitrogen)

Provides both protein and moisture for organisms.

- Fruit and vegetable scraps
- Coffee grounds and tea bags (no nylon bags)
- Egg shells (shell only)
- Green leaves
- Grass trimmings
- Old flowers

*For a healthy compost pile you will need a good balance of air and water.*

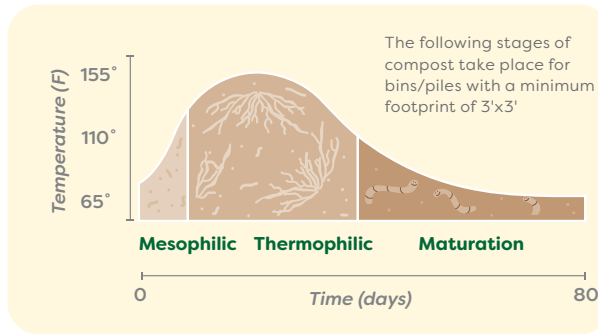
## Oxygen

Allows for organisms to survive while keeping the pile odor free.

## Water

Allows organisms to move around and digest material.

# Stages of Compost



## STAGE 1: Mesophilic

*First few days*

Pile contains moderate temp (65°-100°F) and organisms begin to work on easy to digest materials.

## STAGE 2: Thermophilic

*2-3 weeks*

As material is being digested, the pile heats up (130°-155°F) and difficult to digest materials are broken down.

## STAGE 3: Curing/Maturation

*6-8+ weeks*

Microbial activity and decomposition slows down. Compost is finished when dark brown and ambient temp (80°-110°F).

# Types of Compost Systems

- Plastic Bin**  
Often available at city/county workshops. Great for residential use.
- Compost Tumbler**  
Hand crank to make mixing compost easier. Watch air vents to prevent blockage.
- Wire Bins**  
A simple way to make a large bin but can dry out more easily.
- Wooden and Pallet Bins**  
Great community bin for processing large amounts.
- Worm Bins**  
Small footprint that can process food scraps quickly. Keep in shady, cool area.
- Covered Piles**  
Can vary in size. Ensure pile has equal parts carbon to nitrogen and is covered.

# Frequently Asked Questions

**What do I do if my compost pile smells?**  
Your pile should be turned and more browns should be added.

**Why is my pile not getting hot?**  
You may need to add more green materials to the bin or water. Also, ensure that your bin is large enough for the organisms to do their work. If using a worm bin or bin that is less than one cubic yard, your bin will not heat up too much, but you will still create something of value.

**How long does it take to finish?**  
It depends on what process you're using. The more you turn and water, the more quickly it goes. Our community compost hubs take about three months to generate finished material. Compost is finished when it is a dark chocolate color like coffee grounds, no longer hot, and smells earthy.

**Will critters and pests be attracted to it?**  
Make sure your compost is covered with mulch or enclosed in a bin to prevent critters and pests.

**Can you compost meat, dairy, and cooked food?**  
You can in a large facility, but it is not ideal for a small scale home or community composting. We only accept small amounts (no more than two lbs per drop off) of meat, dairy, and cooked food at our Farmer's Market Drop-offs and Regional Compost Hubs. We will not accept them at any of our community hubs.

**Are 'compostable items' really compostable?**  
Compostable plastics are **often** designed to decompose in industrial facilities at extremely high temperatures. Many paper-based products are often coated in a grease-resistant synthetic liner. Compostable plastics and paper products often contain PFAS, a group of "forever chemicals" that never fully break down, contaminate the environment, and **may** cause chronic health issues. Products made from pure wood, bamboo, palm leaf, or cardboard do not have PFAS.