



Composting not only helps you reduce the waste you send to landfills, but also creates an excellent soil conditioner for home landscaping and gardening.

Composting

Successful composting is easy. Just follow these simple steps:



1 What is the appropriate kind of composter for you? You can either build your own or buy a durable plastic or wood commercial composter.

2 Place your composter in a convenient, accessible, well-drained location. Many people put it in a far corner of their yard, only to discover they don't use it because it is "out-of-sight". It is not much fun to run out to the composter in snow, wearing your housecoat or pajamas!



3 Layering is key to a healthy compost pile. Start filling your composter with dry, brown materials rich in carbon (*dead leaves and plants, dry grass clippings, and shredded newspaper*). Add wet, green materials rich in nitrogen (*fruit and vegetable scraps, weeds that have not gone to seed, and manures*). Always top with a layer of dry, brown materials.



4 Keep your compost pile as moist as a well wrung-out sponge, so the decomposer microorganisms can effectively transform your waste into dark, rich compost. Turn your pile a few times a month to aerate and mix the carbon and nitrogen materials together. *Note: A healthy compost pile should feel warm to the touch. If you notice it cooling down, turn it.*



5 After 6–12 months your finished compost (*called humus*) is a dark, nutrient-rich soil conditioner. Mix the compost into your vegetable gardens or flower beds, or use as a top dressing for your lawn. The compost can also be used as mulch around your plants to help protect the root systems from heat and water loss.

Tip: There are composting tools such as compost thermometers and turners available. Check out your local garden centre.

*For more information, see the **Composting** brochure available inside the Okanagan Science Centre.*

In the Okanagan, over 40% of the garbage in our landfills is composed of organic waste that can be effectively composted including food, yard and garden waste.