

# COMPOSTING AT HOME IS EASY!

## What to Put in Your Compost

The yard waste you can compost is mostly browns (carbon) and kitchen waste is mostly greens (nitrogen). You want to have about 15-20 to 1 ratio of browns to greens. A good rule of thumb is to not add animal-based ingredients to the kitchen waste destined for your compost pile.

### Browns (Carbon) - Yard waste is primarily made up of brown materials.

- **Leaves/Straw/Dead Grass** – Shred to break down faster
- **Wood Chips/Sawdust** – Add a lot of nitrogen materials to make up for this high carbon content; Don't use too much and don't use treated woods.
- **Pine Needles and Cones** – Don't overload the pile; decomposes slowly
- **Cardboard** – Shred into small pieces if used; Moisten so it is easier to tear. If you have a lot, recycle some of it.
- **Cornstalks/Cobs** – Best if shredded and mixed well with greens
- **Eggshells** – Rinse and Crush shells because they break down slowly
- **Newspaper** – Shred it so it breaks down easier. It's easy to add too much so remember to recycle if you have a lot. Don't add slick color pages.

### Greens (Nitrogen) - Food waste is made up of mostly green materials.

- **Algae, Seaweed, Lake Moss** – Good source of nutrients and microorganisms
- **Coffee Grounds/Filters/Tea Bags** – Worms love coffee grounds!
- **Recently Cut Grass**
- **Vegetable Peelings, Salad and Fruit Scraps**
- **Old Flowers or Spent Potted/Bedding Plants**
- **Weeds** – Make sure they are not seeding! Dry out on pavement before adding.

## What CAN'T Go into Your Compost

- **Ashes from charcoal or coal** – contains materials bad for plants like sulfur and iron.
- **Dog/Cat droppings or litter** – May contain disease organisms. Avoid!
- **Diseased Plants** – If your pile doesn't get hot enough, it might not kill the disease organisms.
- **Fish Scraps, Meat, Fat, Grease, Oils, Bones, Dairy** – Avoid. Can attract rodents and cause a stinky pile!

Learn more about at-home composting on the web at  
<http://eriewire.wordpress.com>