

Composting 101 Westminster Presbyterian Style

I. What is it?

- Recycling of organic matter (leaves, food, paper) so that decomposing organisms can create soil
- Can be on a large scale (bring to group drop off area) or at one's home (in your kitchen or in your yard).
 - At Present, WPC will help by providing resources for at home efforts

2. What are the benefits?

- **Reduces household waste** - 28% of average household trash is compostable food/garden waste
- **Reduces methane emissions from landfill** – Composting of food creates little to no methane, and sequesters 50% of the carbon. Overall greenhouse gas effect of landfilled food is cut 98% since the release of methane has 28 times the greenhouse gas effect.
- **Wonderful fertilizer** – You further reduce your greenhouse gas emissions as you don't use commercial fertilizers derived from petroleum.
- **Reduces your food wastage** – you may waste less as you may focus better on what you throw out

3. What do you need?

- A small container to take food waste from kitchen to yard
- A spot in the Backyard for a pile or a bin
- Browns and Greens in ratio of 1:4 (look above)
- if you are a hot composter using a pile or bin, a tool to stir the compost
- **THAT'S IT !!!**

4. What are the Types of At Home Composting ?

- There are **cold or hot** types
 - **Cold** –
 - No effort but takes the longest to get usable fertilizer
 - **How to Steps**
 - Find a shady place in the yard to create a pile; add some
 - Just throw kitchen waste on the pile and let nature take its course; add some leaves now and again
 - **Hot** –
 - **A bit Harder (not much)** – Some effort to get the nitrogen, carbon, air and water balanced
 - Greens for nitrogen – grass, food, coffee grounds
 - Browns for carbon – leaves, twigs, paper
 - Air for oxygen – stir it in a box ; spin it with a rotating drum
 - Water – usually from the kitchen food
 - **How to Steps:**
 - Get a box or rotating drum (3 foot cube box; rotator drums at Home Depot): Put in shady place in the yard
 - Add 1-4 parts brown for each part green and alternate layers to start; don't worry about layering after the initial start

- Stir the compost once a week, or rotate the drum
- Add more greens if dry, more browns if wet

5. If you want a bin

- Here are commercial suggestions

INDOOR COLLECTION CONTAINERS

Below are a few suggestions/ideas for where to store your food scraps from the kitchen--each are small enough that they can fit on your kitchen counter! This is a convenient way to store your food scraps indoors until you want to bring them outside to add to your pile! To reduce the odor of your food scraps, look for containers with air filters!



- 2.4 gallon capacity
- Odor-reduction filter
- \$30



- 1.3 gallon capacity
- No leakage or rust w/stainless steel
- \$23 w/Amazon Prime



- 1.5 gallon capacity
- Odor-blockers & Dishwasher safe
- Made w/biodegradable bamboo fiber
- \$40 w/Amazon Prime

OUTDOOR COMPOST BINS

Below are a few suggestions/ideas for different types of bins/ways to store your compost in your backyard! Don't want to buy a compost bin? Follow the instructions on the next page to create your own!



- 120 gallon capacity
- Large over top entrance for easy access
- Made w/100% recycled & UV-resistant plastic
- \$100



- 12 separate 18.5 gal containers
- Tumbler design so you don't have to turn compost by hand
- beginner-friendly
- \$97



- 82 gallon storage
- Adjustable vents that help experienced composts regulate airflow manually
- made from 100% recycled materials
- \$104

- If you want to make a bin

OPTION 1: CLOSED CONTAINER

THINGS YOU WILL NEED: durable plastic bin, power drill, soil (preferably from the garden), worms



STEP ONE: FIND A BIN

This is a great opportunity to repurpose a plastic storage bin that might be lying around your house!

STEP TWO: DRILL HOLES

Oxygen is key to ensuring that the composting process can occur. In order to provide proper ventilation, drill holes towards/at the top of the container and on the bottom.

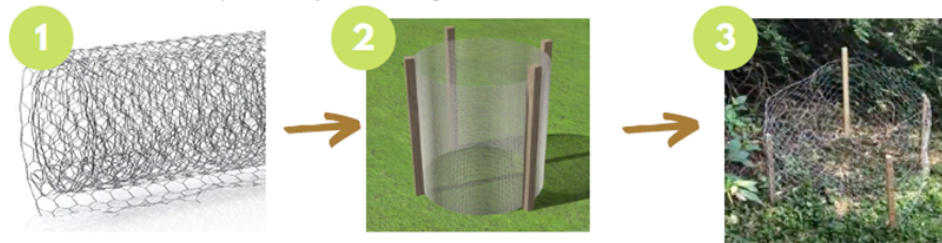
STEP THREE: HAPPY COMPOSTING!

Once you have drilled enough holes to create enough air flow, its time to start composting! Start by creating a base of soil and other brown material (sticks, dry leaves, etc.) and follow the steps on page

3!

OPTION 2: OPEN PILE

THINGS YOU WILL NEED: 4 wood stakes, chicken wire (10-12.5ft long), 4-8 zip ties, wire cutters, gloves, soil (preferably from the garden), worms



STEP ONE: CUT THE WIRE

Once you have found a sunny spot in your backyard, put on your gloves and cut wire (careful-cut wire can be very sharp) and make sure no ends are sticking out. Your compost pile should be at least 3 feet in diameter, which requires about 10 feet of wire.

STEP TWO: SET UP THE STAKES & SECURE THE WIRE

Place the 4 wood stakes in the ground, forming the 4 corners of the pile (remember-the pile should be at least 3 feet in diameter). Wrap the wire around the 4 posts and secure them with zip ties.

STEP THREE: HAPPY COMPOSTING!

Once the pile is set up, you can start composting! Create a base of garden soil and other brown material (and worms for a nice jumpstart!) and follow the steps on page

3!

WHAT YOU CAN AND CAN'T COMPOST IN YOUR BACKYARD

CAN BE COMPOSTED



- Cardboard (uncoated, small pieces)
- Coffee grounds and filters
- Eggshells
- Fireplace ashes (from natural wood only)
- Fruits and vegetables
- Grass clippings
- Hair and fur
- Hay and straw
- Houseplants
- Leaves
- Newspaper (shredded)
- Nutshells
- Paper (uncoated, small pieces)
- Sawdust
- Tea bags
- Wood chips
- Yard trimmings

SHOULD NOT BE COMPOSTED



- **Black walnut tree leaves or twigs** (release substances that might be harmful to plants)
- **Coal or charcoal ash** (might contain substances harmful to plants)
- **Dairy products and eggs*** (create odor problems and attract pests such as rodents and flies)
- **Diseased or insect-ridden plants** (diseases or insects might survive and be transferred to other plants)
- **Fats, grease, lard, oils*** (create odor problems and attract pests such as rodents and flies)
- **Meat or fish bones and scraps*** (create odor problems, attract pests such as rodents and flies, and might also carry pathogens)
- **Pet feces or litter*** (might contain parasites, bacteria, germs, pathogens, and viruses harmful to humans)
- **Yard trimmings treated with chemical pesticides** (might kill beneficial composting organisms)

*These materials should not be composted at home but may be accepted by your community curbside or drop-off composting program. Check with your local composting or recycling coordinator.

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, "Composting at Home," www2.epa.gov/recycle/composting-home.

7. Tips

- With the cold approach and the open bin approach, animals may come. The rotating bin may avoid this problem
- Fruit Flies may come
 - Dry the pile out – Add browns
 - Keep the kitchen waste in a container in the kitchen and add every 3-4 days starves them
 - When adding kitchen waste, add some browns on top

8. And now for real treat –Jill Sink's Easy Composting Photo Guide

First

Get an indoor plastic or stainless steel container with some venting



Second

Scrape the food scraps from the plate into the pan (no meat or citrus skins, please). You can keep this indoors for a couple of days before heading to step 3. Add some browns (brown paper bag) if needed



Third

Take the indoor pan and dump it into the outdoor bin (mine revolves – but not necessary)



Fourth

Add browns (leaves or brown paper) when needed. Occasionally rotate or stir the bin



In a month or 2 harvest your garden fertilizer.

Resources:

1. <https://www.nrdc.org/stories/composting-101>
2. <https://www.nrdc.org/stories/composting-way-easier-you-think>
3. https://www.tectn.org/uploads/1/1/9/8/119801148/come_post_your_compost_the_guide_1.pdf
- 4.