



Composting Info and Tips

Brought to you by: Cariboo Chilcotin Conservation Society's
Waste Wise Program

In partnership with the City of Williams Lake and the Cariboo Regional District
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Moisture: Decomposers in your compost piles need moisture to work effectively, but not too much. Compost should be "as wet as a wrung out sponge". It is ideal to keep your piles covered, and water manually.

Aeration: Compost piles tend to pack down and squeeze out oxygen, so the pile should be aerated once a week, or more. Use a compost turner, poke holes with a crowbar or broom handle or turn the pile with a garden fork. Aeration also ramps up microbial activity, composting your pile even faster.

Layering: Alternate at least 2 layers of *carbon rich* **browns** with 1 layer of *nitrogen rich* **greens**, separated by one ½ layer of garden soil.

Browns (Carbon)	Greens (Nitrogen)
Leaves (best if chopped first)	Fruit and vegetable waste*
Newspaper/paper products (veggie ink only)*	Egg shells (crushed)
Straw	Seaweed/kelp
Dried grass/garden plants/chopped twigs/branches	Coffee grounds/filters and tea bags/leaves
Vacuum dust, pet hair, dryer lint	Green grass clippings*
Cardboard*	Garden waste/weeds (no seeds)*
Well-weathered sawdust*	Well-rotted manure (2 years or more)

*These items have higher nitrogen or carbon content: use them more sparingly than other listed compost ingredients to avoid an unbalanced C:N ratio

Keep these OUT of your compost:
Meat, dairy products, eggs, bones, oils or dressings*
Dog or cat waste/cat litter
Particle board, plywood, pressure treated wood – anything with glue
Persistent weeds/diseased or invasive plants
Toxic plants like walnut shells/leaves

*these items can be composted separately by using a bokashi or green cone composter

Think of your composter as a **giant layer cake** with 2:1 Carbon to Nitrogen ratio:

Layer 1: 6" coarse **brown** material (twigs or stalks) to encourage air flow

Layer 2: 12" finer **brown** materials

Layer 3: 2" finished compost or good garden soil - a source of bacteria
(If the composter sits on concrete, asphalt or wood, this layer is a necessity)

Layer 4: 6" **green** materials, chopped if possible

Layer 5: 12" finer **brown** materials

Layer 6: 2" finished compost or good garden soil

Layer 7: 6" **green** materials, chopped if possible

Continue to layer: Alternate layers, maintaining a 2:1 C/N ratio, separated by soil. Always end with a carbon layer on top to discourage flies and rodents.

Finished compost will be dark brown, loose and crumbly, have a sweet, earthy smell, and a neutral pH (around 7.0). Sift out larger, undecomposed pieces and return to the pile. The finished compost can then be lightly dug into garden soil, or spread across the lawn.