Composting Resources from Fall and Winter Workshop

Fall & Winter Stormwater Workshop Resource Guide

Composting Services*

Good Earth Compost: 812-824-7928 (leaves, woody debris, grass)
JR Ellington Tree Expert: Mulching facility 812-332-5882 (woody debris).

Leaf Disposal Services*

Ava's Waste Disposal: 812-327-2302 accepts yard waste as long as the yard waste is placed in a yard waste bag and set next to the trash container.
Rumpke: 800-828-8171

Monroe County Highway – Stormwater Program

https://www.co.monroe.in.us/department/division.php?structureid=131

Monroe County Stormwater Crew completes stormwater best management practices such as ditching, street sweeping, infrastructure repair/maintenance for stormwater infrastructure maintained by the Monroe County Highway Department. Stormwater Program staff

- -completes plan review and inspects parcels with a stormwater permit/under Chapter 761.
- -investigate reported Illicit discharges (common examples include engine oil, concrete debris, sediment) released to stormwater infrastructure and follow up with responsible parties to eliminate the discharge.

For requests to repair MC Highway roads, traffic signals and/or stormwater infrastructure, call 812-803-6810.
For questions on the Stormwater Management Ordinance (SMO) CH 761, call 812-803-6345.
To report illicit discharges, call 812-349-2565 or use above QR code to access the website.

Monroe County Soil and Water Conservation District

https://www.monroecoswcd.org/

Erica Eason (812-325-0000) provides technical site visits to improve stormwater and soil health. Soil and Water Conservation District offers stormwater partnership grant (cost share program) to aid private property owners complete stormwater improvement projects.

Waste Reduction District of Monroe County

https://wastereductiondistrict.com/

Elisa Pokral (812-349-2866) holds a compost workshop every spring (in June) and she provides year-round composting consultation. Waste Reduction District offers discounted rain barrel and compost bin sales, check their website in January 2025 for more information.

*Not an endorsement and/or recommendation of services provided. Additional companies or contractors within Monroe County, Indiana may offer similar services that are not listed on this resource guide. Current as of October 2024.

Waste Reduction District OF MONROE COUNTY

Composting

Reducing climate change one toss at a time: home & community collection

Two options

Home compost and or use a collection facility for brush listed below

Composting turns food waste into soil, not trash
Keeps food waste out of landfills!

Composting reduces climate change
Food waste in landfills creates greenhouse gases which affect climate, ecosystems, and YOUR health

Home Composting Questions: Elisa K. Pokral, *Community Outreach Coordinator, epokral@mcswmd.org,* 812-349-2866
Good Earth Compost: 812-824-7928 (leaves, woody debris, grass); **JR Ellington Tree Expert: Mulching facility 812-332-5882** (woody debris)

You're just one click away
wastereductiondistrict.com

Composting

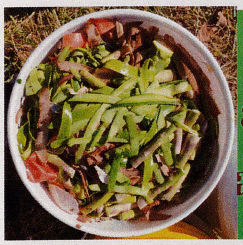
Keep food waste out of your trash!

Save on trash disposal by composting

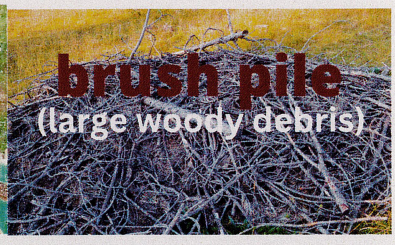
The District offers free Home Composting consultation year-round

- No more smelly trash
- Nutrients are returned to the soil and water is conserved. RE: produce, plants are healthier, and so are you!
- Composting ties up carbon in the soil which minimizes the greenhouse effect
- Composting can reduce your trash by up to 25 to 40% depending on method used
- Without food waste in landfills, less methane gas is produced. Methane is more potent than carbon dioxide

NOTE: No meat, bones, or dairy in home compost



Compost at home and at businesses



Visit wastereductiondisrict.com/compost-recipe for HOME COMPOST RECIPE

wastereductiondistrict.com

Backyard Composting

IT'S ONLY NATURAL

Composting is nature's way of recycling organic materials back into the soil in order for the cycle of life to continue. The billions of living organisms in healthy soil transform dead plants into vital nutrients for new plant growth. Since healthy plants come from healthy soil, one of the best ways you can build healthy soil in your garden and lawn is by using compost. You can easily make compost with landscape trimmings and food scraps in your own backyard. With a small investment in time, you can improve the health and appearance of your yard, save money on fertilizers and mulch, all while preserving natural resources and protecting the health of your family and pets.

Why compost?

- **It's earth-friendly**: Food scraps and yard waste make up 20-30% of the waste stream. Making compost keeps these materials out of landfills, where they take up precious space and release methane, a greenhouse gas 21 times more potent than carbon dioxide emissions in the atmosphere.
- **It benefits your yard**: Compost improves soil structure and texture, increases the soil's ability to hold both water and air, improves soil fertility, and stimulates healthy root development in plants.
- **It's easy**: You can start with just leaves and grass, then work your way towards composting your food scraps.
- **It saves money**: Adding compost to your garden can reduce or eliminate the need to buy chemical fertilizers or compost. If you pay for the amount of trash hauled, composting can also cut down on your trash costs.

EPA United States Environmental Protection Agency

GreenScapes U.S. EPA Sustainable Landscapes

What do I need to do to make compost?

A **Bin or Pile?** Some people start with an easy pile, and then move to a bin when they're ready. You can give your pile some structure with chicken wire, snow fencing, or by nailing scrap wood together to make a four-sided box. A pile works great for just leaves and grass clippings, but when you want to incorporate food waste, it's time to use a bin to prevent rodents. Closed-top bins include turning units, stacking bins, and bins with flip tops. Many communities provide their residents free or discounted bins to encourage backyard composting. Bins can also be purchased from retail or mail order businesses. Take the time to consider your options and then select a bin or pile to fit your needs.

B **Space.** Select a dry, shady, or partly shady spot near a water source and preferably out of sight for your compost pile or bin. Ideally, the compost area should be at least three feet wide by three feet deep by three feet tall (one cubic yard). This size provides enough food and insulation to keep the organisms in the compost warm and happy and working hard. However, piles can be larger or smaller and work just fine if managed well.

C **Browns for carbon, greens for nitrogen, air for organisms, and water for moisture.**

Brown material provides carbon and includes:

- Paper, like shredded pieces of paper, cardboard, and paper rolls,
- Dry yard waste, like dry leaves, small branches, and twigs, straw, sawdust, and used potting soil.

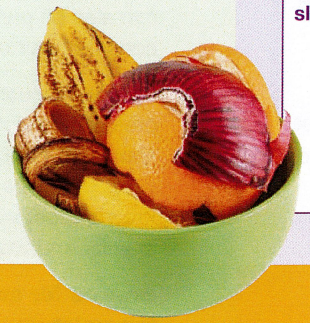
Green material provides nitrogen and includes:

- Wet yard waste like fresh grass clippings, green leaves, and soft garden prunings
- Food scraps like vegetable and fruit peels, coffee grounds, and tea bags.

Vermicomposting is a method of composting using a special kind of earthworm known as a red wiggler (Elsenia fetida), which eats its weight in organic matter each day. Vermicomposting is typically done in a covered container with a bedding of dirt, newspaper, or leaves. Fruit and vegetable scraps can then be added as food for the worms. Over time, the food will be replaced with worm droppings, a rich brown matter that is an excellent natural plant food. Vermicomposting requires less space than normal composting methods, and is therefore ideal for classrooms, apartments, and high-density urban areas.

How do I make compost?

1. Add your brown and green materials (generally three parts browns to one part greens), making sure larger pieces are chopped or shredded. The ideal compost pile contains browns and greens (of varying sizes) placed in alternate layers of different-size particles.
2. Mix grass clippings and green waste into the pile and bury fruit and vegetable waste under 10 inches of compost material.
3. As materials breakdown, the pile will get warm and on cold days you may even see some steam.
4. Every time you add to the pile, turnover and fluff it with a pitchfork to provide aeration, unless your bin has a turner.
5. When material at the bottom is dark and rich in color, with no remnants of your food or yard waste, your compost is ready to use. There may be a few chunks of woody material left; these can be screened out and put back into a new pile. The resulting compost can be applied to lawns and gardens to help condition the soil and replenish nutrients. Compost should not be used as potting soil for houseplants because it may still contain vegetable and grass seeds.



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Troubleshooting Your Pile

Problem:	Cause	Solution:
Rotten egg smell	*Insufficient air or too much moisture*	Turn pile and incorporate coarse browns (sawdust, leaves)
Ammonia smell	*Too much nitrogen*	Incorporate coarse browns (sawdust, leaves)
Pile does not heat up or decomposes slowly	*Pile too small*	Add more organic matter
	Insufficient moisture	Turn pile and add water
	Lack of nitrogen	Incorporate food waste, grass clippings, or manure (chicken, rabbit, cow, horse)
	Not enough air	Turn pile
	Cold weather	Increase pile size or insulate with straw or a tarp

How do I get started?

What to add

Greens:

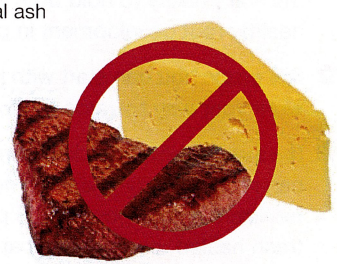
- Uncooked or cooked fruits and vegetables
- Bread and grains
- Coffee grounds and filters
- Grass clippings
- Paper tea bags with the staple removed, if there is one.
- Hair and fur
- Chicken, rabbit, cow, horse manure

Browns:

- Cotton or wool rags
- Dryer and vacuum cleaner lint
- Eggshells
- Nut shells
- Fireplace ashes (from wood burning)
- Sawdust
- Hay and straw
- Yard trimmings (e.g., leaves, branches, twigs)
- Houseplants
- Used potting soil
- Wood chips
- Leaves
- Shredded newspaper
- Cardboard rolls
- Clean paper

What not to add

- Aluminum, tin or other metal
- Glass
- Dairy products (e.g., butter, milk, sour cream, yogurt) & eggs
- Fats, grease, lard, or oils
- Greasy or oily foods
- Meat or seafood scraps
- Pet wastes (e.g., dog or cat feces, soiled cat litter)
- Soiled diapers
- Plastic
- Stickers from fruits or vegetables (to prevent litter)
- Black walnut tree leaves or twigs
- Yard trimmings treated with chemical pesticides
- Roots of perennial weeds
- Coal or charcoal ash
- Firestarter logs
- Treated or painted wood



For more information on composting: **www.epa.gov/compost**. *To learn additional ways to green your lawn and garden:* **www.epa.gov/greenscapes**.

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Why Compost?

What is composting?

Composting is the practice of creating ideal conditions to accelerate the decomposition of organic* material, just as it occurs in nature. The process consists of "decomposer" organisms (like earthworms, insects, fungi, bacteria) that consume the material by breaking down as they feed on it.

The word compost (noun) is also used to refer to the finished product that is created by the composting process.

*Organic in this context refers to "living matter", and not the USDA's food certification

Why do it?

Perhaps the better question is why not? The costs of not doing it are significant, and the sole "advantage" of not doing it is saving about 10 minutes per week. Is that worth it?

Let's start with food waste: First, it is a little discussed but a huge problem. Roughly 30-40% of all food produced for human consumption is wasted. It is the single largest source of municipal waste in the US, making up 24% of the national stream. Worst, over 55% of US food waste is landfilled.

What's the problem with Landfills?

Landfilled food has to be transported there, which represents roughly 65 million tons hauled and uncounted vehicle miles traveled every year.

Decomposition in a landfill generates between 15 - 30 times the amount of greenhouse gas emissions than composting because of their structure and chemistry.

Decomposition inside is much slower and can even stop altogether. Mined landfill samples have uncovered foods as much as 50 years old with no signs of decay.

Landfilling is a linear process that delivers minerals and nutrition from soil to a sealed chamber with toxins, which is both unsustainable and irresponsible.

Equally as wasteful, about 7.5 million tons per year are burned in incinerators, which actually consumes energy because of its moisture content, and contributes to air pollution.

Lastly, the finished compost that results is a high quality, nutrient rich fertilizer that can be used to replace synthetics in any yard applications, from tree and shrub health to farming & gardening.

Keeping food out of the trash can and into compost costs less financially, costs less in planetary resources and pollution, increases planetary stability, creates nutrient rich soil and takes about 10 minutes per week.

Monroe County
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