

TROUBLESHOOTING THE COMPOST PILE

Symptom	Problem	Solution
Pile smells bad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not enough air Too much water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turn pile Add dry material
Pile will not heap up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not enough moisture Pile size too small Lacking Nitrogen material Particle size too big 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add water Build pile to at least 3'x3'x3' Mix in fresh manure, grass clippings, or fruit/vegetable scraps Chip or grind materials
Pile attracts flies, rodents, or pets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pile contains bones, meat, fatty or starchy foods, or animal manure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alter materials added to pile; bury fruit/vegetable scraps in the middle of the pile, or under 8" to 10" inches of soil, or compost them in a worm bin.
Pile has slugs in it (and so does garden)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pile is easily accessible and provides daytime hiding place and breeding ground for slugs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove slugs and slug eggs from pile (eggs look like very small clusters of pearls). Locate compost pile far from vegetable gardens and/or create barriers around pile/garden (traps, copper flashing)

Through the Smart Gardening Program Los Angeles County offers **FREE** workshops where residents learn:

- ✓ How to reduce yard waste.
- ✓ How to improve lawn and gardens.
- ✓ The benefits and biology of composting.

Workshops are usually offered in early summer at:

Horsethief Canyon Park
301 Horsethief Canyon Rd.
San Dimas, 91773
9:30 am - 11:00 am

Information will be published on the City's website and in the Spring Newsletter.

For additional information please visit:
www.smartgardening.com



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From Home Garbage to Home Garden



A guide to composting

COMPOSTING



Yard trimmings and food residuals together constitute over 20 percent of the U.S. municipal solid waste stream. Composting offers the benefits of resource efficiency and creating a useful product from organic waste that would otherwise have been landfilled. It is a natural way of making your own soil. In doing this you are eliminating the use of fertilizers and chemicals and providing pure organic soil.

HOW TO COMPOST

Here are a few common ways to compost:

Vermicomposting — most common form of indoor composting; red wiggler worms are contained inside a ventilated bin and used to break down organic matter into rich soil.

Backyard Compost Pile — Choose a site that is handy to your garden and kitchen, yet out of plain sight. You don't need a bin to make compost—a pile of leaves, grass clippings and other yard wastes will do

Straw Bale Composting — Pick up 4 bales of straw. Straw has less seed so it will bring less weed seeds into the compost mix. Place the bales in a U shape and add your composting material into the shape.

Indoor Composter — machine that automates the whole composting process.

INGREDIENTS:

While a multitude of organisms, fungus and bacteria are involved in the overall process, there are four basic ingredients for composting: nitrogen, carbon, water and air.

Nitrogen — Green materials such as grass clippings and landscape trimmings are ideal sources of nitrogen for composting. Vegetable and fruit trimmings and peels can also provide nitrogen.



Carbon — Brown (dry) yard and garden material such as dry leaves, twigs, untreated wood chips, sawdust, or hay can provide the carbon balance for a compost pile. Chop or shred large pieces to 12 inches or shorter (thick, woody branches should be chipped, ground up, or left out).

Water — One of the most common mistakes in composting is letting the pile get too dry. To test for adequate moisture, reach into your compost pile and grab a handful of material and squeeze it; if a few drops of water come out, it's probably got enough moisture, if it doesn't, add water.



Air — The bacteria and fungus that are in your compost pile need oxygen to live and work. If your pile is too dense or becomes too wet, the air supply to the inside is cut off and the beneficial organisms die.

THINGS YOU CAN COMPOST:

- ✓ Cooking scraps that are produce only
- ✓ Eggs shells are very good
- ✓ Beverages — coffee, tea
- ✓ Coffee grinds
- ✓ Teas leaves and bags
- ✓ Hair
- ✓ Paper towels
- ✓ Kleenex
- ✓ Cardboard cut up in little pieces
- ✓ Compostable Condiments – Herbs, spices, jams and preserves
- ✓ Cotton balls, cotton swabs, lint from the dryer shredded cotton



Any thing that is biodegradable to make it simple.

THINGS YOU CANNOT COMPOST:

- ✗ Meat
- ✗ Oils
- ✗ Fat
- ✗ Grease and bones
- ✗ Non biodegradable materials
- ✗ Ashes coal or charcoal
- ✗ Dog droppings
- ✗ Cat droppings {cat litter}
- ✗ Colored Paper

Lime acidity can kill composting action

