

St. Johnsbury Composts!

What is Compost?

Compost is created when organic matter decomposes into humus. Microorganisms and bacteria are the workhorses of the compost process.

Why Compost?

- Composting is easier and cheaper than sending organic matter to the landfill.
- About 1/3 of the waste Vermont residents create each year could be composted.
- Food waste in landfills does not decompose as well as if composted. In fact, decomposing organic matter trapped in a landfill creates methane, a greenhouse gas that contributes to global warming.
- Compost improves soil by adding nutrients and improving its ability to hold water.

Have a garden, a lawn, trees, shrubs, or planter boxes? You have a use for compost.

What Can I Compost?

Compost ingredients fall into two categories — “**GREEN**” provide **nitrogen** and “**BROWN**” provide **carbon**. Kitchen scraps, yard trimmings, fallen leaves, straw, and so much more can be composted. See below for a more comprehensive list.

What Stays Out of the Compost?

- Meat, bones, grease
- Painted/pressure treated wood
- Coal ashes
- Anything treated with pesticides
- Dairy products
- Cat/dog feces

Where can I compost?

Start composting today in your own backyard! Compost bins and containers for kitchen scraps are available for sale at the Caledonia Farmer’s Market in St. Johnsbury, or at the town offices.

Contact St. Johnsbury Town Manager at 748-3926

If you have no room for a yard bin, talk with your neighbors about sharing one, or consider employing worms to do your composting for you!

Be sure to stop by the Caledonia Farmer’s Market in St. Johnsbury, Saturdays 9-1 to learn more about composting and to talk with Vermont Master Composters!

Clip the list below and post it in your kitchen as a handy reference guide.

Brown Materials

Straw and hay
Wood chips and sawdust (untreated)
Unbleached paper towels and napkins
Nut shells
Shredded newspaper (no glossy/colored inserts)
Dry grass and leaves
Hair

Green Materials

Kitchen food scraps
Fruit and vegetable scraps
Grass, yard trimmings & weeds
Manure (horse, cow, pig, sheep, goat, chicken, rabbit)
Coffee grounds and filters
Tea leaves and bags (remove staples)
Egg shells



Where Can I Learn More and Get Help?

www.compostingvermont.org

www.compostguide.com

<http://www.earth911.org>

www.mastercomposter.com

<http://www.uvm.edu/mastergardener/mastercomposter/>

Common composting materials

Type of Material	Use it?	Carbon (C) Nitrogen (N)	Details
Algae, seaweed, lake moss	Yes	N	Good nutrient source.
Ashes from coal or charcoal	No	n/a	May contain materials bad for plants.
Ashes from untreated, unpainted wood	Careful	Neutral	Fine amounts at most. Can make the pile too alkaline and suppress composting.
Beverages, kitchen rinse water	Yes	Neutral	Good to moisten the middle of the pile. Don't over-moisten.
Bird droppings	Careful	N	May contain weed seeds or disease organisms.
Cardboard	Yes	C	Shred into small pieces if you use it. Wetting it makes it easier to tear. If you have a lot, consider recycling instead.
Cat droppings or cat litter	No	n/a	May contain disease organisms. Avoid.
Coffee ground and filters	Yes	N	Worms love coffee grounds and coffee filters.
Compost activator	Not required, ok.	Neutral	You don't really need it, but it doesn't hurt.
Cornstalks, corn cobs	Yes	C	Best if shredded and mixed well with nitrogen rich materials.
Diseased plants	Careful	N	If your pile doesn't get hot enough, it might not kill the organisms, so be careful. Let it cure several months, and don't use resulting compost near the type of plant that was diseased.
Dog droppings	No	n/a	Avoid.
Dryer lint	Yes	C	Compost away! Moistening helps.
Eggshells	Yes	O	Break down slowly. Crushing shells helps.
Fish scraps	No	n/a	Can attract rodents and cause a stinky pile.
Hair	Yes	N	Scatter so it isn't in clumps.
Lime	No	n/a	Can kill composting action. Avoid.
Manure (horse, cow, pig, sheep, goat, chicken, rabbit)	Yes	N	Great source of nitrogen. Mix with carbon rich materials so it breaks down better.
Meat, fat, grease, oils, bones	No	n/a	Avoid.
Milk, cheese, yogurt	Careful	Neutral	Put it deep in the pile to avoid attracting animals.
Newspaper	Yes	C	Shred it so it breaks down easier. It is easy to add too much newspaper. Don't add slick colored pages. Recycle instead.
Oak leaves	Yes	C	Shredding leaves helps them break down faster. They decompose slowly. Acidic.
Sawdust and wood shavings (untreated wood)	Yes	C	You'll need a lot of nitrogen materials to make up for the high carbon content. Don't use too much, and don't use treated.
Pine needles and cones	Yes	C	Don't overload the pile. Also acidic and decomposes slowly.
Weeds	Careful	N	Dry them out on the pavement, then add later.
Sod	Careful	N	Make sure pile is hot enough, so grass doesn't grow.

Prepared by the St. Johnsbury Waste Reduction and Recycling Committee in St. Johnsbury, Vermont - April 2007.

*For more information or to join our committee,
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