


SPROUT 

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Compost

Compost

Description:

Compost has many benefits such as providing many essential nutrients for plant growth when used as a fertilizer and can improve soil structure and texture.

- ✓ What is composting?
- ✓ Why is composting done?
- ✓ How to compost?
- ✓ How to use compost?

Learning Outcomes

- Outline the different methods of composting.
- Describe the best method of starting a composting heap at home.

What is composting?

- Compost is a mixture of organic matter, as from leaves and manure, that has decayed or has been digested by organisms, used to improve soil structure and provide nutrients.
- Composting is the activity or converting garden and kitchen waste to compost.



Why is Composting Done?

- Composting is a win/win scenario, as it is good for you and good for the environment.
- By composting you can:
 1. Save money
 2. Save resources
 3. Improve your soil
 4. Reduce your impact on the environment
- Adding compost to your garden will not only fertilize, it actually feeds your soil with a diversity of nutrients and microorganisms that will improve plant growth.

Protecting the Environment Via Composting

- Using and making compost benefits the entire planet.
- Composting helps the environment by:
 1. Keeps stuff out of landfills, which are rapidly reaching capacity across the world
 2. It promotes healthy plants
 3. It reduces the use of pesticides, fungicides and fertilizers, many of which are harmful to the environment (and to the fish, animals and humans that live in it).



How to Compost?

- There are five methods for composting:
 1. **Onsite composting** – The composting of small amounts of food waste.
 2. **Vermicomposting** – The use of earthworms to convert organic waste into nutrient-rich fertilizers via composting.
 3. **Aerated (turned) windrow composting** – The process of placing the mixture of raw materials in long narrow piles called windrows that are agitated or turned on a regular basis.
 4. **Aerated static pile composting** – The method of composting without the physical manipulation during primary composting.
 5. **In-vessel composting** – The group of methods that confine the composting materials within a building, container or vessel.

Starting a compost pile at school/home

- You can recycle leaves and other plant materials at home by setting up a compost bin.
- First select a spot to set up your bin which should be out of the way but convenient for you and close to a source of water.



Above are different examples of compost bins that can be used.

Starting a compost pile at school/home – Compost Recipe

- The microorganisms that recycle leaves and other plant parts need an even mix of brown and green material to feed on.
- They also require air and water to live and work.
- Put all this together and in time you will have compost!

Brown Stuff:

Dead, dried plant parts such as leaves and pine needles. They are high in carbon.



Green Stuff:

Fresh, living parts like grass clippings, kitchen vegetable scraps, weeds and other parts. They are high in nitrogen.



You should **NEVER** use:

Meat

Fat

Pet droppings

Bones

Milk

Diseased plants

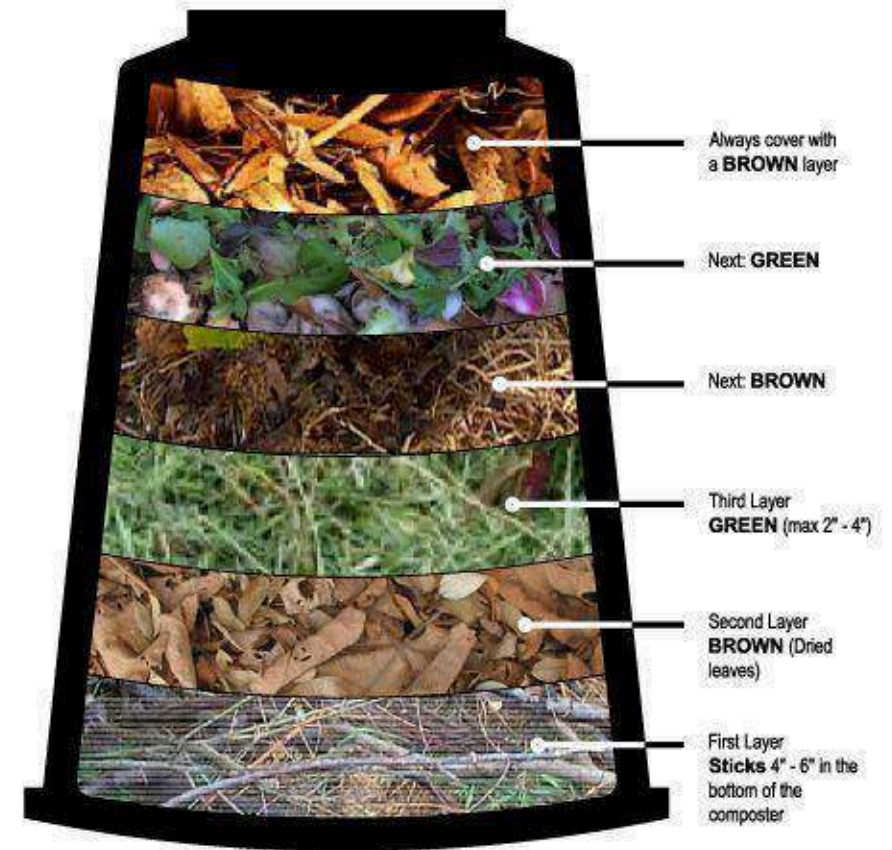
Cheese

Soils

Meat and milk products should not be used as pests may attempt to dig these up and diseased plant materials should never be used as they may spread diseases back into the garden when the compost is used.

Starting a compost pile at school/home – Layering

- It is easiest to build the compost bin in layers.
- Start with a first layer of brown stuff about 15 cm thick.
- The next layer should consists of green stuff which should be a few centimetres thick.
- It is helpful to mix the layers up a little as you make them.
- Then sprinkle some soil or compost on top of this to add microorganisms to the bin.
- Each layer should get a good sprinkling of water to wet the ingredients. It is important to wet each layer as you build it.
- Repeat each of the layers until the bin is full.



How to Use Compost?

- The four most common uses for compost are:
 1. **A moisture holding mulch** – Mulch protects the soil and shades out weed seeds. Nutrients are washed out into the soil with each rain to feed the roots of plants
 2. **A soil amendment** – Add compost to soil at the time of planting and mix it well hence fertilizing the soil.
 3. **A compost tea** – The liquid matter released by the compost and can be poured onto flowers or plants.
 4. **A lawn top dressing** – Adding a layer of compost on top of your grass, where it will work its way into the soil as the grass grows.



ACTIVITY TIME!