

A Quick Guide to Composting: What and How

Ratio of Content Types:

- 30 parts *Carbon* to 1 part *Nitrogen* (30:1).
- Too much Carbon slows down decomposition.
- Too much Nitrogen produces a foul smell, liquid.
- A good ratio of C:N creates the heat required to decompose.

Maintenance:

- Smaller pieces decomposed faster than larger pieces.
- Stir the compost occasionally, once every 2-3 weeks.
- If very dry, add some water and stir with a pitchfork or garden shovel.
- Once a complete layer of Nitrogen is established, put a Carbon layer on top.

Tip for Collecting in the Kitchen:

- Line the bottom of your kitchen collection bin with a paper towel or piece of brown paper bag/paper. This will help to keep it clean. This is a cheaper and more effective alternative to buying kitchen compost bin liners (a “compostable” plastic).

GREEN/Nitrogen Matter	Neutral	BROWN/Carbon Matter
Raw Fruit and Vegetable	Egg shells (broken up small, crushed) Excellent source of calcium!	Leaves (shredded with lawn mower) The most ideal Carbon source!
Coffee grounds & filter		Woody Branches (Chopped small; breakdown slowly)
Cut Flowers (Chop up stems)		Pine Needles (Chopped small if long; breakdown slowly)
Tea leaves/tea bags (non-nylon)		Nut shells, pine cones (a <i>small</i> amount of pine cones)
Brown paper bags (shredded/torn up by-hand)		Empty toilet paper rolls and paper towel rolls (shredded/torn up)
Plant Clippings (No diseased plants)		Cardboard (non-bleached and non-printed only)
Weeds (that haven't set seed)		Egg cartons, the brown cartons (without glossy paper only)
Grass Clippings (In layers less than 1-inch)		Saw dust

Note: Fruit pits/seeds (ex. peaches and avocado) and thick skins (ex. avocado) breakdown slowly. They might need more than one season in the composter and that's okay!