

Benefits of Composting

- A fun individual, family, or community activity!
- Reduce waste (34% of the waste stream is yard and food waste) and methane gas, a powerful greenhouse gas that contributes to climate change.
- Improve soil and garden health.

Make Your Own Compost!



SAN MATEO COUNTY
Sustainability
Department

888-442-2666

www.smcsustainability.org

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about classes,
discounts, and
rebates!

1 Choose a Method and a Location



6 Is it done?

Signs that your compost is done and ready for harvesting:

- Dark chocolatey brown
- Crumbly feel
- Earthy smell
- Material fairly small

Sift any remaining large material such as pieces of wood with a screen and add them to your next compost pile!



7 Use it as

- Soil conditioner
- Top dressing
- Mulch
- Potting mixture



4 Compost Critters

Common critters that break down organic material:

- Pill bug
- Centipede
- Ant
- Fungi
- Mold
- Earthworm
- Fruit fly
- Slug
- Beetle
- Spider



2 Build a Pile

Build a pile of 60% "browns" to 40% "greens" in alternating layers. Chop larger materials into smaller pieces.

Browns (Carbon)
Dried plant material
Paper towels, napkins, and plates
Newspaper
Cardboard
Untreated sawdust

Water
Add water as you build the pile.
Keep as moist as a wrung-out sponge.

Greens (Nitrogen)
Grass clippings
Coffee grounds
Vegetables
Herbivore manure
Fruit
Grains



3 Pile Maintenance

- Turn the material from the outer edges to the center to add oxygen.
- Add water as needed so it is as wet as a wrung-out sponge.
- If you have a thermometer, turn the pile when it reaches 160° F. If you do not have a thermometer, after the pile is hot for a few days turn it and continue turning it every few days until the pile cools to ambient temperature.

- Diseased plants
- Dog or cat feces
- Chemicals
- Meat, fish, and poultry
- Dairy
- Treated Wood
- Fats, oils, and grease