

What All Can You Compost?

What types of things can be composted in a soil compost bin, bucket, or tumbler?

What Can I Compost?





about what to put in compost piles in order to feed the micro-organisms and keep the pile composting smoothly. Gardeners suggest having a healthy balance of “brown” compost materials and “green” compost materials. Brown composting materials, such as dead leaves, are high in carbon. Green composting materials, such as grass clippings and vegetable peels, are high in nitrogen.

Yard waste belongs in your [composter](#) rather than in the trash. If you notice your neighbors throwing away a large amount of yard waste, you should ask if you can have it to compost instead. Leaves, grass clippings, weeds, and wood chips are all great things to compost. However, you should exercise caution when composting weeds, as if you compost any seeds along with them, the seeds may sprout when you decide to fertilize your garden with the compost, giving you an instant weed problem! Some weed seeds may even begin to sprout while inside your compost heap.

Kitchen waste is a great source of composting material. Vegetable peels and uneaten food are great sources of nitrogen for you compost pile. You should be careful about composting meat, fatty food, and bones, however, since they can attract pests. In fact, it is often against city ordinances to compost such materials since it lures pests into the city. Fatty foods do not compost well anyway, as the fat hinders the bacteria in the compost pile from doing its job.

Some gardeners are proponents of composting human feces as well as

pet feces, but in general you shouldn't compost fecal matter unless you monitor the temperature of your compost pile very closely and can know with certainty that all microbes and parasites in the fecal matter have been killed.

- **Composting fecal matter can be incredibly dangerous due to the risk of contamination.**
- **Obviously things that are not biodegradable should not be composted. This includes plastic, glass, and metal.**
- **While they probably won't hurt your compost pile, they will never compost and will just block airflow to the rest of your pile.**
- **You should never put pressure treated wood in your compost pile or build your [compost bin](#) out of pressure treated wood.**

The process for pressure treating wood involves injecting a pesticide chromated copper arsenate (CCA) into it at a high pressure. When this wood composts, it will leave toxic amounts of arsenic inside your compost pile. Pressure treated wood usually has a greenish tint due to the CCA, but not always. If you are unsure whether wood has been treated with CCA or not, you should have it tested. Thankfully, pressure treated wood has become more and more rare in the past few years since people have become aware of the risks.
