

## Composting- “Turn Trash into Treasures”

Have you ever wondered about the good stuff in your trash? Well, it has been proven that our trash is consisting of about 28 percent organic matter. Organic matters are materials that can be easily broken down into substances that are useful in the building of soil. The process by which organic materials are broken down is called composting.

How Does Compost happen?

In order for composting to take place, the following ingredients should be placed in a pile: brown materials (leaves, straws, and shredded wood), green materials (grass, fruits and vegetable scraps). These items in combination with water and air create high temperatures providing an environment for yard debris, grass clippings and vegetable scraps to break down. Macro organisms, such as earthworms and insects as well as microorganisms such as bacteria, fungi and microbes help to further break down the compost pile.

What are the benefits of composting?

Composting helps your garden and container plants by improving the fertility of the soil, and saving money. Therefore, a soil that contains a large quantity of composted materials (humus) usually does not need inorganic fertilizer. Composting also helps to protect the environment by recycling valuable organic resources that would pollute our water source if these were not properly disposed.

What composting structure to use?

When thinking of composting, it's best to decide what structure you want to use to compost your yard clippings and trimmings in. Also keep in mind that there are some homeowners associations that do not permit piles of yard waste; check with your association before you start to a composting pile. A good container creates a neat and tidy structure that retains heat well, is visually pleasing, and serves as a reminder for you to compost. Composting structure varies from as simple as a 5 gallon bucket to as complex as a store bought 55 gallon container. Materials for composting can be placed in a heap, a hoop, wooden structure, plastic store bought bins, homemade or store bought tumbler, buckets or trash can.

What to compost?

The following are excellent composting material; grass clippings, leaves, shrub prunings, flowers, sawdust, fruit & vegetable scraps, coffee grounds, tea bags, and small amounts of uncoated paper.

What not to compost?

The following items will attract pest and should not be used for composting; butter, bones, cat manure, cheese, chicken, dog manure, fish scraps, vegetable oil, mayonnaise, meat, milk, peanut butter, salad dressing, and sour cream.

For more detail information on composting and other topics related to horticulture contact Grantly Ricketts at 321-697-3000 or email [gricketts@ufl.edu](mailto:gricketts@ufl.edu)