

COMPOST TROUBLESHOOTING

THE PROBLEM	THE CAUSE	THE SOLUTION
Compost smells offensive	Anaerobic conditions (not enough air)	Turn the pile, add more browns to the pile
Pile doesn't heat up	Pile too small, too dry and/or not enough greens	Add more greens to the pile, add water while turning
Material isn't breaking down quickly	Not enough moisture and/or large material size	Add water, chop materials into smaller pieces
Pile is attracting ants	Pile too dry, food scraps not buried	Add water, bury all food scraps in core of pile
Excessive flies and/or rodent foraging	Food scraps exposed, wrong ingredients	Bury food scraps in core, do not add meat, dairy or oils

Developing skill

Composting is best learned by doing. Through practice and observation you will find what works best, and you can modify the process to suit your needs. There are also a number of books written on backyard composting; check your local library or bookstore.

Other ways to reduce organic waste

In addition to composting, you can also help reduce organic waste by:

- **Grasscycling**- leaving grass clippings on the lawn when you mow, The nitrogen-rich clippings decompose quickly, adding nutrients to the soil and helping your lawn retain water.
- **Mulching**- is uncomposted material that is spread over the surface of the soil. Using mulch has many benefits: It prevents soil erosion, reduces the evaporation of water from the soil, and inhibits weed growth. It has even been shown to reduce the incidence of certain plant diseases. The best way to apply mulch is to spread a layer approximately 3-inches thick around the base of plants. Take care to keep the mulch from touching the base of plant stems or trunks.
- **Vermicomposting**- using red worms to compost food scraps, newspapers, and cardboard, yielding nutrient-rich castings.

