

### **The Benefits of Composting**

1. It is cheap, even free. All it takes is a 3' x 3' area and some organic waste.
2. It reduces the amount of trash we pay to dispose of. Two-hundred pounds of composted kitchen waste per household per year (less than 9 ounces per day) would eliminate an estimated 80 tons, or approximately 8% of the total trash we produce as a Town. Since the dumping fees at landfills is based on weight, removing compostable material from our waste stream will save money. Conservative estimates predict a savings of at least \$5000.
3. Compost is a valuable addition to any garden. Even if you don't actively garden, you can simply spread the compost on the plantings around your house or share it with an appreciative neighbor.
4. Composting is a great project to do with children.

The key to compost is creating a pile of biodegradable material. Almost anything that is plant-based can go into the pile. The pile needs two key ingredients: carbon (the browns) and nitrogen (the greens). Browns are dead leaves, faded flowers, old straw, sawdust (in moderation), and non-woody plant/shrub trimmings or twigs less than 1/4" in diameter. Greens are grass clippings (avoid grass heavily treated with chemicals), fruits and vegetables, weeds, eggshells and coffee grounds. A good rule of thumb is about three parts brown to one part green. With this ratio and adequate moisture, the pile will decompose relatively quickly (within a few weeks) and will reach a temperature high enough to sterilize weed seeds. Composting containers are also available at a reasonable cost. Some options are shown in the web sites listed below.

If accelerating the decomposition process is not important to you, there is no need to be concerned about the brown to green ratio. Simply put your compost materials into a pile and wait. The pile will decompose, but it will take longer and because the pile will not reach high temperatures, weed seeds may still be active in the finished compost. Add to the pile throughout the year, and come next spring, the material at the bottom of the pile will be ready to use. For more information on composting please visit the following websites:

[www.compostguide.com](http://www.compostguide.com)  
[www.compostumbler.com](http://www.compostumbler.com)  
[eartheasy.com/grow\\_compost.htm](http://eartheasy.com/grow_compost.htm)