

Recipe for Healthy Soil ~ Compost

Relax, this is an easy recipe to follow. If you don't have all the ingredients, you probably have some neighbors that would be willing to contribute to your Compost.

Ingredients for compost:

- 1 Large wheelbarrow full of brown stuff (fallen leaves, straw, etc.)
- 1 Large wheelbarrow full of green stuff (lawn clippings, yard trimmings, etc.)
- 1 Shovel or pitch fork and a little elbow grease

Mix:

Mix thoroughly and moisten slightly so entire pile feels like a wrung out sponge.

Pile:

Your pile should reach 3 feet high by three feet wide in all directions or approximately one cubic yard.

Heat:

Naturally your pile will begin to heat as microscopic critters and fungi begin their work decomposing your pile. The highest temperatures (130° to 160°F) may be reached in 3 to 5 days. Keep your pile moist like a wrung out sponge and

turn your pile once a week so there will be

plenty of oxygen available to keep the microbes healthy and multiplying; continue turning occasionally for several months.

Apply:

When it's done cooking, your brown leaves and green grass clippings should be un-recognizable; they'll look and smell like rich forest soil. Add finished compost to garden, lawn or flower beds. This will improve your soil by increasing organic matter, which increases nutrient retention and helps the soil hold water.

Enjoy:

The benefits of home composting are many...you prevent waste and save precious landfill space, you save money on disposal, and you improve your environment with a healthy alternative to petrochemical fertilizers.



How can I learn more about backyard composting?

The Clark County Master Composter/Recycler program offers free educational materials, yard debris and food waste composting workshops and training throughout the year. For details on class dates and times, call the Master Composter/Recycler office at (360) 882-0936 or visit www.columbiasprings.org. The office is located at Columbia Springs Environmental Center, 12602 SE Evergreen Hwy, Vancouver.

If you don't have the space or inclination to whip up a batch of homemade compost, consider subscribing to Yard Debris Service from Waste Connections. The yard debris picked up by this service is taken to a commercial composter for processing. Call **360.892.5370** or visit www.wcnorthwest.com for more information.

See the Brown Pages for additional information: If you received a Clark County Qwest Dex phone book, then you have a wealth of recycling, yard debris and garbage information at your fingertips. Check out the Brown Pages, (right behind the green Community pages in the front of the book) and you will find the answers to your solid waste questions. You can get up to date information at the local WCI website, www.wcnorthwest.com.