

**Why Compost?**

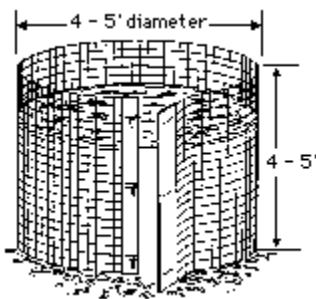
Composting is important because 20% to 30% of household waste is organic material that can be composted, rather than disposed, thus saving landfill space. Compost is a valuable soil amendment that will help your plants thrive. Compost helps your landscape retain water and nutrients better, and that means you can irrigate and fertilize less in areas treated with compost.

**Backyard Composting**

Backyard composting is an attractive, simple method of managing organic wastes at home. This can be done easily right in your backyard.

- Start the composting process with equal amounts of green materials and brown materials cut into pieces no larger than 1" in size. Mix the materials and add water every 7-10 days. Your compost is ready to use when it's dark brown, crumbly and smells like fresh turned earth.

**Types of Homemade Backyard Composters**

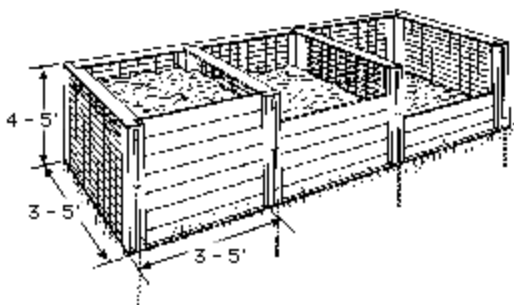
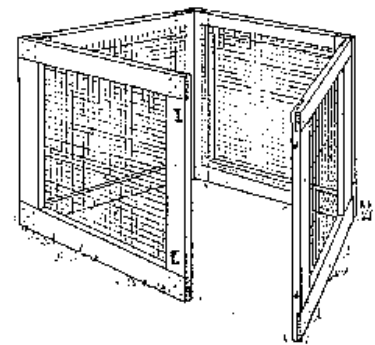


**Simple Wire Unit**

A simple structure can be made from wire fencing or snow fence. Multiply the diameter you want by 3.14 to determine the length of fence needed. Fasten with wire or 3 or 4 chain clips. When you need to turn the pile, peel the fence away and set it up nearby. Turn the compost into the structure in its new location.

**Wood & Wire Bin**

This unit is very flexible. It works well in small spaces as a holding unit for yard wastes or as a portable turning unit for kitchen and yard wastes. The unit can be easily moved to turn piles or build a new one: Simply undo the latches, pull the sides apart and move it.



**3 Bin Unit**

A very efficient and durable structure for fast composting is a three-chambered bin. This unit can hold a larger amount of compost, and allows good air circulation. The three-chambered bin works on an assembly line idea, having three batches of compost in varying stages of decomposition. The compost material is started in the first bin and allowed to heat up for three to five weeks. Next, it is turned into the middle bin for another four to seven weeks, while a new batch of material is started in the first bin. Finally, the material in the middle bin is turned into the last bin as finished or nearly finished compost.