

Living Streamside

Guide to Designing your Property and Protecting our Watershed



BACKYARD BUFFER PROGRAM

Composting

Description:

- Organic material is used as a soil amendment, slow release fertilizer or mulch.
- Created by combining:
Greens (grass clippings, fruit and vegetable scraps) with
Browns (Leaves, twigs, wood chips) in a compost bin.
- Over time, material breaks down into usable soil.



Tip Sheet #5

Functions/Benefits:

- Reuses household scraps & yard materials (clippings/leaves) as valuable fertilizer.
- Provides vital nutrients that help plants grow and look better.
- Reduces or eliminates the need for chemical fertilizers.
- Reduces material entering landfills.

Photo Credits: Photo 1) Gardens Alive! online catalog, Photo 2) www.gardenfeatures.org.uk, Photo 3) www.motherearthnews.com May 6, 2008



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What to Compost	What <u>NOT</u> to Compost
Yard trimmings	Black walnut tree leaves or twigs
Fruits and vegetables	Coal or charcoal ash
Leaves	Dairy products (butter, eggs, milk, etc)
Coffee grounds and filters	Diseased or insect-ridden plants
Wood chips	Fats, grease, lard, or oils
Eggshells	Meat or fish bones
Houseplants	Pet wastes
Sawdust	Yard trimmings treated with pesticides
Grass clippings	Pressure treated wood chips and sawdust
Nut shells	Poison ivy or poison sumac
Tea bags	
Fireplace ashes	
Shredded newspaper	

Source: United States Environmental Protection Agency: <http://www.epa.gov/waste/conserve/rrr/composting/index.htm>

Cost:

Compost Digester \$100 (capacity: 80 gallons)

Exaco Trading Co. 170 Gal. Composter \$160

Wood & wire mesh designs vary (do it yourself designs) \$20 to \$150

Sources:

- Gardens Alive Environmentally Responsible Products (www.gardensalive.com)
- Home/hardware stores

References:

- Pennsylvania State Cooperative Extension by county (<http://extension.psu.edu/>)
- Soils testing: Pennsylvania State Agricultural Analytical Services Laboratory (www.aasl.psu.edu)
- United States Environmental Protection Agency. (www.epa.gov/waste/conserve/rrr/composting/index.htm)



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