

COMPOST

Organic matter decomposed to a state where it has become humus.

Organic matter: the water remains or waste products of any living thing

Humus: A fragrant spongy nutrient rich material resulting from the decomposition of organic matter.

Compost recycles **all** organic matter on the planet, stabilizing nitrogen

Benefits to the Soil

Increases water retention

Increases aeration

Nutrients released over time

Provides balanced nutrients

Improves soil structure

Balances pH

Adds micronutrients

Full of beneficial microbes

Compost is ALIVE, it a buffer and reacts with the life in the soil.

Chemical fertilizer is designed to be directly released to the plant—a one-time shot

Feed the soil to feed the plant

Four key elements to compost:

- 1. Nitrogen (green leafy material)**
- 2. Carbon (brown and woody material)**
- 3. Moisture (from water)**
- 4. Oxygen (from air)**

Aerobic Composting (with air)

Carbon (browns)/ Nitrogen (greens) balance (Ideally 25 to 1, by volume approx 1 to 1)

Water/Air balance

3'x3' minimum size for pile to heat up.

Primary decomposers (FBI)

Bacteria (heat up the pile); the pile gets hot because of microbial respiration (“party in the pile”).

Fungus (begin their work as the pile begins to cool down).

Insects/Invertebrates and worms (work in the completely cooled parts of the pile).

When building a pile, use what you have.

The smaller the particles are when you begin, the faster they break down.

Keep your layers even and flat when building.

When the pile cools down, turn it.

Compost is “finished,” or stable, when it no longer heats up.