

Home Composting to Reduce the Waste Stream

Composting is Mother Nature's way of breaking down vegetative matter into a nutrient rich soil conditioner. Compost can improve soil drainage and aeration for improving the health of plants roots. Compost can supply small amounts of essential nutrients that fertilize our plants. The organic matter in compost holds onto more nutrients from the supplemental fertilizers you may apply, this is an efficient use of a fertilizer. Compost increases the biological activity of soil organisms for a healthy environment which encourages plant growth.

Backyard composting of yard waste is an environmentally sound way of reducing solid waste by recycling a useful resource where it is generated. The cost of collecting, hauling and handling yard trash is a large share of the solid waste management expense.

Yard wastes such as fallen leaves, grass clippings and twigs make excellent compost. Woody yard wastes can be chipped, run through a shredder and incorporated into a compost pile. Vegetable and fruit scraps, coffee grounds and egg shells may be added to the pile but should be thoroughly incorporated into the soil to avoid any odors. Meat, bones, cheese, salad oil or cooking oil should be put in the garbage, not into the compost pile. These items attract animals, create odors are slow to decompose and might possibly carry disease causing organisms.

To save space, to hasten decomposition and keep the yard looking neat, construct or buy some sort of structure for the compost pile. Composting structures can consist of a variety of materials and can be as simple or complex as desired. There are many options available that can be tailored to individual needs. For more information on home composting call the Master Gardener Volunteer Hotline M-F, 9-4 at 561-233-1750.

Figure 1 Home made Compost Units

