

## 4 Reasons to Compost

1. Food scraps and yard waste currently make up 20 to 30 percent of what we throw away.
2. When food ferments in landfills, it releases methane, a potent greenhouse gas.
3. Compost enriches soil, helping to retain moisture and suppress plant diseases and pests.  
And it reduces the need for chemical fertilizers.
4. It's free and easy.

### The Recipe

Your compost pile should have an equal amount of browns to greens.

**\*Browns:** dead leaves, branches, and twigs.

**Greens:** pesticide-free grass clippings, vegetable waste, fruit scraps, and coffee grounds.

Alternate layers and moisten materials as they are added. The browns provide carbon for your compost, the greens provide nitrogen, and the water provides moisture to help break down the organic matter. Research bins online to see what works for your needs.

### What to Compost

Fruits and vegetables	Cardboard	Sawdust
Eggshells	Paper	Wood chips
Coffee grounds and filters	Yard trimmings	Cotton and Wool Rags
Tea bags	Grass clippings	Dryer and vacuum cleaner lint
Nut shells	Houseplants	Hair and fur
Shredded newspaper	Hay and straw	Fireplace ashes
	Leaves	

### What Not to Compost and Why

- Black walnut tree leaves or twigs  
*Releases substances that might be harmful to plants*
- Coal or charcoal ash  
*Might contain substances harmful to plants*
- Dairy products (e.g., butter, milk, sour cream, yogurt) and eggs  
*Create odor problems and attract pests such as rodents and flies*
- Diseased or insect-ridden plants  
*Diseases or insects might survive and be transferred back to other plants*
- Fats, grease, lard, or oils\*  
*Create odor problems and attract pests such as rodents and flies*
- Meat or fish bones and scraps\*  
*Create odor problems and attract pests such as rodents and flies*
- Pet wastes (e.g., dog or cat feces, soiled cat litter)\*  
*Might contain parasites, bacteria, germs, pathogens, and viruses harmful to humans*
- Yard trimmings treated with chemical pesticides  
*Might kill beneficial composting organisms*

Learn more: [epa.gov/recycle/composting-home](http://epa.gov/recycle/composting-home)