

SELECT A METHOD

Your compost pile can be as simple as a heap of materials in a corner of your yard, or a bin to help organize the pile and keep it from blowing around your yard. Ready-made and easy-to-assemble bins can be purchased at local hardware and garden supply stores, or there is a list of bins available for purchase on the back page of this brochure. Many people prefer to use their own method or create a bin themselves. There are many different types of methods or units to choose from.



HEAPS/PILES

What are they? Heap composting doesn't require a structure. It is simply a pile placed in your yard.

How? Combine organic materials together in a heap/pile measuring about five feet wide and three feet high. Materials may be added as they become available, or stockpiled until enough materials are available to make a good sized heap. Dampen to the damp sponge stage. The pile may be turned regularly or not at all.

Pros/Cons? This is the least expensive method, but if no turning is done, composting will take many months.



MULCHING

How? Spread leaves and grass clippings around the base of plants a few inches from the stem. Chipped woody waste can be used as mulch around trees and shrubs.

Pros/Cons? Yard waste works first as mulch then decomposes into a soil amendment. The disadvantage is you have to buy or rent power equipment to chip woody wastes.

Variations: Chipped materials can be used to make informal garden paths.



HOLDING UNITS

What are they? Simple containers or bins that hold yard and garden waste until composting is complete.

How? Add organic material to the holding unit as it is generated. The composting process can be hastened by chopping or shredding organic materials, mixing high-nitrogen and high-carbon materials, maintaining proper moisture, or turning the pile.

Pros/Cons? Holding units are easily made and are a relatively inexpensive method of composting. Composting may take six months to two years depending upon the organic materials and conditions present.

Variations: Possible holding units are circles of wire fencing or hardware cloth, old wooden pallets wired or tied together, snow fencing or wire framed in wood. In any case, the unit should be constructed to allow air transfer through the sides and back.

