



TURNING UNITS

What are they? A series of three or more bins, or a rotating barrel/rolling ball that allows wastes to be turned regularly. Most appropriate for gardeners with a large volume of yard waste, or for those requiring faster composting.

How? Layer alternately, high-carbon and high-nitrogen materials in a 30:1 ratio. Moisten to the damp sponge stage. When the temperature of the pile decreases substantially, turn it into the next bin. Again, dampen if not moist and add high-nitrogen material if heating doesn't occur. After the pile heats and cools again, turn into the third bin. The compost should be ready for use after two weeks in the third bin.

Pros/Cons? Produces a high-quality compost in a short time with a large amount of care and labor. Units may be expensive to build or buy.

Variations: Turning units may be built of wood, concrete block, or a combination of wood and wire. There are also barrel/rolling ball composters which tumble the wastes.

Additional Information

For detailed plans and diagrams on how to make and use your own holding or turning units refer to Chapter 2 and Appendix A of the guide *Composting to Reduce the Waste Stream* (available at all Public Libraries in New Hampshire).

To see a working demonstration of a three bin turning unit, you can visit the gardens at Prescott Park in Portsmouth, New Hampshire.



One way to further reduce the amount of waste going into the landfills and incinerators and to improve the quality of your compost is to incorporate food wastes into your backyard composting program (see "What Can I Compost" in this brochure). Currently the State of New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services permits kitchen wastes to be composted at the same location that they are generated. This means that you can compost your own kitchen wastes in your own backyard. However, additional care should be taken when introducing food wastes into your compost pile to avoid odors or attracting wild animals.



SOIL INCORPORATION

Burying your organic waste is the simplest method of composting.

Which Wastes? Kitchen scraps excluding bones, meat, dairy or fatty foods.

How? Bury everything at least eight inches below the surface. Fill and cover the hole. This can become planting space next season.



Pros/Cons? A simple method but the absence of air means some nutrients are lost. Rodents and dogs may become a problem if the waste isn't buried at least eight inches.