



OCEAN COUNTY Composting Guide



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About us

Solid Waste Management with the support of the Board of Commissioners, works diligently to preserve Ocean County's environment by developing innovative recycling & composting programs. We operate two regional recycling centers, composting facilities, and compost demonstration garden.

As an NJDEP award recipient for Outstanding Education Program 2008 & 2021, we have helped Ocean County residents recycle right and compost better for a cleaner, greener, and sustainable tomorrow.

Barbara J. Mason
Barbara J. Mason
Ocean County Board of Commissioners



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Ocean County Department of Solid Waste Management
For questions contact us at compost@co.ocean.nj.us
or call 732-506-5047

Why Compost?

**Food waste comprises 30% of your garbage.
The average household produces 200 lbs
of organic waste every year.**

- It's easy and takes as little as 5 min per week
- Common practice from our ancestors
- Turns food waste into soil amendment
- Saves water by retaining soil moisture
- Saves landfill space, and reduces greenhouse gas emissions
- Improves soil by adding nutrients
- Reduces fertilizer needs and helps plants grow
- Compost contains microorganisms that fight plant diseases, natural pesticides!
- Attract beautiful wildlife such as butterflies, lightning bugs, birds, and more!
- Good for your garden health, good for the planet!



Our Programs

Composting Workshops

Learn how to create a beautiful garden through backyard composting. We offer free composting workshops and presentations to all ages.



Volunteer Program

Program trains volunteers on the benefits of composting, recycling, and sustainability. Volunteers then share this knowledge through outreach and education.

Free Garden Products

We produce top quality compost and mulch at our facilities, made from resident's brush & leaves. No weeds or construction waste is ever used.



Brush & Leaves Disposal

Accepted at our recycling centers, residents can come visit both locations

NRC 535 South Oberlin Ave. Lakewood

SRC 379 Haywood Rd. Manahawkin

Mon-Sat 7:30 am to 3:00 pm



Yard Waste Life Cycle



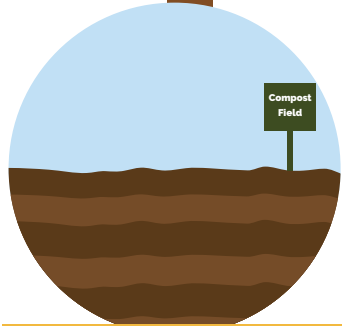
After you place your leaves + brush at the curb



Your Municipality collects them and brings them to the composting fields



Visit our recycling centers to pick up compost, mulch and woodchips. Use it in your yard.



Leaves are composted, brush is transformed into mulch and woodchips.



After testing, they are available to residents at no cost.



Our products are tested to ensure quality.

Types of Composting

There are many types of composting, this guide will cover the following types/methods.

Outdoor Composting



Active (Hot)

Stockpile materials and add all at once. Mix materials, water & turn. Let sit for 4 days, then turn every 2-3 days for 2 weeks. Pile heats up to 140 degrees and can produce compost in 4 weeks.

Effort 



Passive (Cold)

Add materials as you go. Alternate layers of wet & dry materials (greens & browns). Turn every other week, add water as needed. This method will not reach the temperatures to kill weeds or seeds.

Effort 

Indoor Composting

Vermicompost / Worm Composting



Perfect for small households, apartments, and classrooms. Red wiggler worms are placed inside a dark bin, with bedding, and food scraps. Over time, these worms digest food scraps producing a rich compost.

Effort 

Compost Ingredients

If it grows from the ground, it can be composted!
Yard waste, veggie scraps, and products made from plants like paper are all safe to compost.



Browns

(dry, carbon-rich materials)

Leaves

Paper products

Corn Stalks

Straw

Greens

(wet, nitrogen-rich materials)

Fruit & Veggie Scraps

Green leaves

Flowers

Coffee grounds

DO NOT ADD

Dairy products, meat,
bones, dog/cat feces,
invasive plants, weeds.

Brown to green ratio is 2:1
2 parts of browns per 1 part of greens

Add worms for indoor composting
Red Wiggler (*Eisenia fetida*) ONLY

Composting

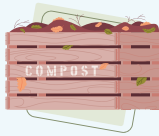
List of materials



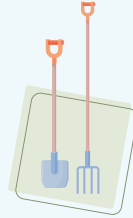
Bucket with lid



Wheel barrow



Compost Bin



Pitch fork or shovel



Organic matter

Location



Close to your kitchen or garden, easy to reach, and access to water.

Place it on bare soil (welcome the insects and bacteria from the soil).

It could be in sun or shade.

Away from trees and shrubs to avoid roots reaching your compost.

Add the materials to the bin

Only add vegetative waste, food waste from vegetables and fruits, and products made out of plants (paper, cardboard, etc). Animal manure from herbivores ONLY.



Remember to always finish up with a layer of brown material, to avoid odors, and flies.

HOT method - Mix materials
COLD method - Layer up!



Outdoors

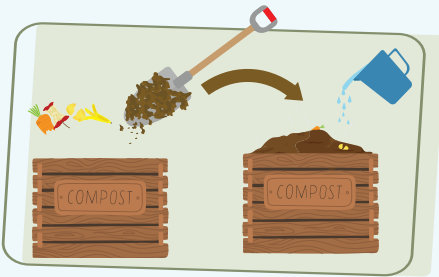
Size to surface area



Smaller pieces break down faster, increase the work area for microorganisms to work by:

- Cutting veggie scraps
- Crushing egg shells
- Shread leaves with lawn mower

Add water and turn

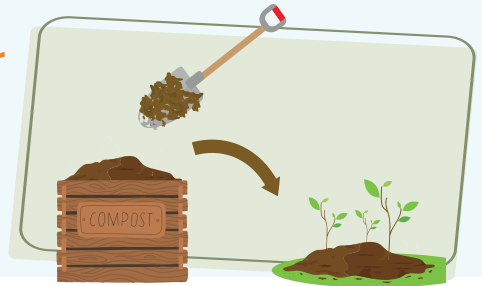


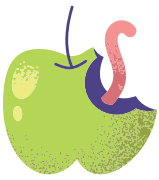
- Add water as needed
- Materials should feel like a "damp wrung out sponge".
- Mixing after each addition will help aerate your pile.

Wait, harvest, and let it cure!

Finished compost looks rich, dark, and crumbly. You won't identify any materials, and the volume will be reduced by over 50%. Smells sweet and earthy!

Let your compost cure for at least 2 weeks, to stabilize the material and avoid burning plants.





Composting

Step 1. Choose a bin

Only use a dark bin (worms are sensitive to light) with holes for ventilation and drainage. You can build your own from many materials (plastic, clay, fabric), or purchase a pre-made bin.

Step 2. Get the right worms!



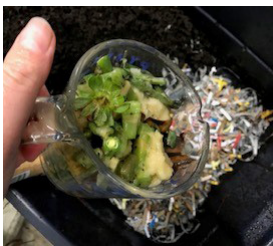
All worms eat organic matter, but not all can survive in a small space or bin, do not use Earthworms, you need: *Eisenia fetida, aka Red Wiggler worms*
1lb. of worms can process 3 ½ lbs. of food scraps per week.

Step 3. Prepare the bin

Prepare 3" base of bedding.
Use shredded paper or chipboard.
Moisten paper so it's not soggy.
Bedding will keep your worms comfy and control moisture.



Step 4. Care and feeding



Add 1c. fruit & veggie scraps.
Crushed eggshells aid digestion.
Add worms, cover with bedding.

Citrus and onions can harm the worms, compost those separately.

Indoors (with worms)

Step 5. Harvesting



Harvest worm castings by pushing finished compost to one side. Add fresh food scraps and bedding to empty side. Worms will migrate from finished compost to new food & bedding.

Build a worm bin!



- Use 2-10 gal. plastic totes.
- Mark Bin #1 at 1" intervals.
- Drill holes along bottom & top edge.



- Bin #2: Drill holes along top edge
- Don't drill holes in bottom
- Drill holes into the lid



- Nest bin #1 into bin #2 (catch basin).
- Place bedding, food & worms in bin #1.
- Set ventilated lid on top.

Keep your worm bin in a warm location, worms won't survive freezing temperatures.

Troubleshooting

Nothing Happens

Materials may be too dry. Add water & turn.

Too many browns. Add greens & turn.

Pile too small. Make 3x3x3. Add more material.

Soggy Compost

Materials may be too wet. Cover bin if rainy.

Too many greens. Add browns & turn.

Smelly Compost

Pile smells like ammonia. Too many greens.

Add brown materials to correct the balance.

Remove any meat, dairy or cat/dog waste.

Attracting Unwanted Critters

Not covering food scraps. Add browns.

Remove any meat, dairy or cat/dog waste.

Finished Compost Too Coarse

Some materials (eggshells & corncobs) take longer to breakdown.

Sift out large chunks. Throw back into next pile.

Worm Bin Troubleshooting

Worms can escape if conditions are adverse, too much food, too many worms, not enough bedding.

Reduce your waste, improve your soil!

Composting questions? email us at compost@co.ocean.nj.us

Using Compost



Add to garden beds



Mix into soil before planting



Top dressing for lawns & shrubs.
Compost will fight weeds!



Add to houseplants

How About Mulch?



- Mulch 2 to 4 inch deep
- Keep mulch 5 inches from trees trunk

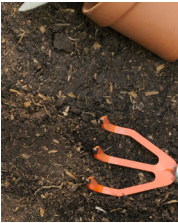
Mulch volcanoes kill trees and shrubs!

Need Compost or Mulch?

FREE to all Ocean County residents
Self pick-up at Recycling Centers

Northern (NRC) 535 South Oberlin Ave. Lakewood
Southern (SRC) 379 Haywood Rd. Manahawkin

Pick up from Mon-Sat 7:30 am to 3:00 pm



Finished Leaf Compost

A great choice for intensively planted flower, shrub and vegetable beds. Compost adds organic matter back to the soil faster than mulch. Ideal to use during Spring.



Single Ground Mulch

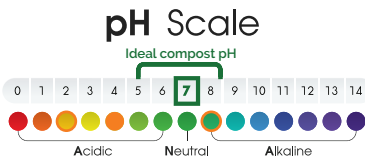
Excellent for walkways or garden beds, our single ground mulch offers great weed suppression and moisture retention. Coarser material that lasts longer than finer mulch.

Double Ground Mulch

Perfect for garden beds, finer more uniform mulch that decomposes faster adding more nutrients and organic matter to your planting beds.

Ocean County compost test results 2021

Compost Data Sheet



2021 pH test:
Composting Facility
Northern (Lakewood) 7.1
Southern (Stafford) 7.2

Trace Metal Test: PASS
(per us epa standard 40 CFR 503.13)

24 Cr 51.9961 Chromium	28 Ni 58.6934 Nickel	29 Cu 63.546 Copper	30 Zn 65.38 Zinc	33 As 74.921595 Arsenic	34 Se 78.971 Selenium	42 Mo 95.95 Molybdenum	48 Cd 112.414 Cadmium	80 Hg 200.592 Mercury	82 Pb 207.2 Lead
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Soluble salts level: IDEAL



Master Composter Program

A volunteer opportunity!

Annual class trains volunteers to promote the benefits of composting, recycling & sustainability through public outreach & education. FREE for Ocean County Residents!

Training program

FREE 12 hours of classroom and hands-on training on sustainability with a focus on food waste, composting, and recycling from Ocean County Solid Waste Management staff and guest speakers.

- Learn to build a compost pile.
- Set-up your own worm bin.
- Tour recycling center/garden.
- Free composting supplies

Be a part of our outreach:

Community events in Ocean County.
School education programs K-12.
Composting presentations.
Compost Demonstration Garden.
Recycling talks.

Requisites

Ages 18+

Interest in composting, and waste reduction.

Commitment to volunteer.

Application to join the Master Composter Program

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

T-Shirt size: _____

Occupation: _____

Volunteer experience: __Y__N



Register

Mail it to Ocean County Master Composter Program
129 Hooper Ave, Toms River, NJ 08754
or email compost@co.ocean.nj.us



Tips to reduce food waste

Reduction is the first step to tackling food waste, according to the USDA, in the US, it's estimated at between 30-40 percent of the food supply ends up wasted.



Write a list before you shop



Store fruits + veggies properly



Use excess fruits for juices or smoothies



Reinvent leftovers



Preserve excess produce



Support your local farmers

**Ocean County Board of Commissioners
Department of Solid Waste Management
Master Composter Program**
compost@co.ocean.nj.us
Social Media @ocrecycles
732-506-5047



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