



# COMPOSTING : A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR HELPING MAKE THE HILLSBOROUGH COMMUNITY SUSTAINABLE FOR THE FUTURE

## Composting Methods

### Slow Harvest—Ready in 12-18 Months

Made by adding layers of available yard waste over several months

1. Set compost bin where it will get rain
2. Put yard waste in bin as it is generated in your yard. The material at the bottom and in the center will compost first.

### Fast Harvest: Ready in 5-15 Weeks

Made by mixing equal weights of green and brown materials at once.

1. Add green materials such as grass clippings or vegetable scraps mixed with brown materials such as leaves (no woody-type materials should be included).
2. Add water to pile until it's as wet as a wrung out sponge.
3. Turn pile with a pitch fork or compost aerator tool twice a week for faster compost production (less often in wintertime).



## Materials for Composting

### Types of Compost Bins:

Compost piles can be created as easily as piles in the middle of your yard. However, to help keep the pile neat and away from pest, it is recommended that you build your pile in a bin or storage house. For most backyard composts, there are two types of bins

- **Store bought bins**—Typically called a compost tumbler, or durable plastic bin. These systems are fully closed, and typically have a lid
- **Homemade bins**—often created from wood materials.



### Types of Compost Material:

- **Grass clippings**
- **Leaves**
- **Flowers**
- **Weeds**
- **Sawdust**
- **Chopped twigs and branches**
- **Coffee grounds/filters**

### Types of Material to NOT Compost

- **Meat scraps**
- **Diseased or insect infected plants**
- **Weeds with seeds**
- **Dog and cat feces**
- **Food with grease or soap residues**

## Composting FAQs

1. *My compost pile is beginning to smell rotten, is something wrong?* - Yes, your compost piles is not getting enough air. To solve this problem, turn you pile a few times to increase aeration.
2. *My compost pile is beginning to smell like ammonia, what do I do?* - Your pile contains too many greens. To solve this problem, begin to add a higher quantity of brown material (i.e. leaves and straw).
3. *My pile is dry, what do I do?* - Your pile is not getting enough water. This is because there is too much woody material. Add more fresh green material, turn, and moisten.
4. *My pile is not composting, is something wrong?* - Yes, your pile is not receiving enough moisture, nitrogen, or is too small. To solve this problem, add new materials, add water, turn your pile, and increate greens like food scraps and grass.
5. *I have pests and rats entering my compost pile, what do I do?* -To solve this problem you must remove any an all meat or fatty food scraps from your pile.

## References

Hlubik, W.T., Forsell, J. (2003). Home Composting, FS811. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers Cooperative Extension

## Introduction

The Sustainable Hillsborough Steering Committee has created a series of brochures to help residents make sustainable choices. The goal of this brochure is to inform Hillsborough residents of the importance of composting and how to build a compost pile in their own backyard. There are so many homeowners with an excessive quantity of leaves in the fall; composting is one alternative to dealing with those leaves environmentally. Funding for this series was provided by a small capacity building grant through Sustainable Jersey.

Please note that this brochure is for informational purposes only. Hillsborough Township does not implicitly endorse any of the vendors listed herein. Information is subject to change.

### What is Composting?

Composting is a process of piling organic material to expedite natural decomposition. The result is a recycled, dark, crumbly, soil conditioner known as "compost". The use of compost in a garden improves the soil structure and moisture retention, and contributes to healthy plant growth by providing plants with nutrients.



### How To Start Composting

Generally, composts are created by layering organic material into a bin to help create an environment for microorganisms to break down, or decompose, the organic material into a dark, crumbly, earthy, soil conditioner. To build this environment, it is important to follow one of two methods of composting in your own pile.

## About

The Hillsborough Township Committee established the Sustainable Hillsborough Steering Committee in 2007 to provide guidance on green and sustainability related issues as the Township pursues a path towards a sustainable future. The Sustainable Hillsborough Steering Committee is comprised of Hillsborough residents who are charged to develop recommendations for strategies to keep the Township moving toward its sustainable goals. The Sustainable Hillsborough Steering Committee will also articulate a long-term vision for the future, educate residents about sustainable development, and provide recommendations to the Township Committee on ways to implement future sustainable practices.

Visit [www.sustainablehillsborough.com](http://www.sustainablehillsborough.com) to learn more about the committee and its mission.



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## Composting Guide for Residents of Hillsborough



*Provided by:  
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