

If you have any problems, odors or pests for example, use the UF troubleshooting guide. And for more complete information, use the compost tutorial. Both are at this website:

<http://sarasota.ifas.ufl.edu/compost-info/>

For even more information:

<http://livinggreen.ifas.ufl.edu/waste/composting.html>

Or call the UF/IFAS Miami-Dade County Extension office (305) 248-3311 x 228



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To learn more about plants, vegetable gardening, landscape care, pest identification, etc., please contact the UF/Miami-Dade County Extension office. Call (305) 248-3311 x 228

We also offer free or low cost classes!

Visit our website
<http://miami-dade.ifas.ufl.edu>



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Florida-Friendly
Landscaping™ PROGRAM

The Miami-Dade Residential Yard Waste Composting program is a partnership between the Miami-Dade Public Works & Waste Management Department and UF/IFAS Miami-Dade County Extension.



COMPOST
It's a wonderful thing!

**University of Florida/IFAS
Miami-Dade County Extension
18710 SW 288th Street
Homestead, FL**

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And it's easier than you think! You will be helping to reduce waste from going into landfills and produce a wonderful product for your plants. When done correctly, compost is not smelly, and does not attract unwanted wildlife & pests.

By reading this brochure, you'll learn how to make "black gold" for your plants!

What is composting?

Composting is the decomposition of organic waste such as food or plant material by microbes (bacteria and fungi), earthworms and other organisms. The end result of composting is decayed organic matter called humus. Humus is a fantastic product to use in your yard to help keep your plants healthy!



Decomposers are not much different than people in terms of their basic needs, so be sure to provide your microbes with all of the basics:

- **Food:** Carbon and Nitrogen (Browns & Greens)
- **Water:** Moist, not soggy
- **Air:** Oxygen
- **Volume:** 3' long x 3' high x 3' deep or 3-5 foot diameter by 3 feet high cylinder
- **Particle Size:** Less than 2-3 inches

What can I compost?



Anything that was a plant. All plant materials contain nitrogen and carbon. Materials high in nitrogen are called "greens" (grass clippings, green leaves, fruit & vegetable kitchen scraps, coffee grounds, and tea bags). Materials high in carbon are called "browns" (brown leaves, paper coffee filters, stale cereals & rice, crushed egg shells, newspaper, and chipped tree branches). To speed up the process, before adding materials to the compost bin, chip or shred items so they are no more than 2-3" long.

Where do I compost?

Most people compost in a bin, which can be located in the shade or partial sun. A bin is not necessary, but helps keep the materials contained and neat. Homemade bins can be a cube, approximately 3' x 3' x 3', or a 5' diameter hoop of hardware wire. Place equal volumes of greens and browns in the compost bin. You can layer the materials in the bin by alternating 3-4" layer of greens and 3-4" layer of browns. Or you may mix up greens and browns, and place them in your bin. Water the compost as you fill the bin.

After I build the compost pile, then what?

The compost will heat up due to biological activity and will settle as the materials decompose. To speed up the process, "turn" the compost periodically (weekly or so). Turning means mixing the compost or taking everything out of the bin and then putting it back. Try to move the materials from the outer sides to the center.

You may add more materials at any time. Bury food wastes in the center of the pile or cover with brown materials such as leaves. You can also start a new bin for handling additional materials.

If you use a covered compost bin, check the pile weekly to see if you need to add water to keep it moist but not soggy.

When is compost ready to use?

The compost is finished and ready to use when it has a uniform look, dark color, small particle



size, and an "earthy" odor. Most of the materials you had put in will no longer be recognizable. Use finished compost as a slow-release fertilizer, soil amendment, in your potting soil and raised bed vegetable garden!