

# GTC QUICK GUIDE TO COMPOSTING

## Home Composting in 10 Easy Steps

1. Get a refuse container or pail that you keep on the counter or under the sink.
2. Post the list of compost matter in plain view.
3. Get a compost bin from your municipality or nearby warehouse store, or better yet, make one yourself using wood (cedar), wire-mesh, bricks, etc.
4. Using a shovel, turn the soil in the selected area. A sunny, well-drained area is the ideal spot for a compost bin.
5. Cover the bottom of the composter with a 5 or 6 cm-layer of small, dry branches.
6. On this bed of branches, place a layer of dead leaves or earth. This will allow air circulation and improve drainage.
7. Layer 2 parts of carbon-rich matter (brown or dry matter) to 1 part of nitrogen-rich matter (green or wet mater).
8. Add finished compost, gardening soil or newspaper to keep flies out
9. Aerate (turn over) the compost pile using an aerator or a pitch fork at least twice a month
10. Check the degree of humidity. Add water to the compost until the degree of humidity is similar to that of a damp sponge. Remember that it is always easier to add water than to remove it!

The final product will be rich, dark mulch that has a discernable smell of humus. Use it in your vegetable garden, flower beds, hanging baskets, around perennials, and on the grass. And give back to nature what it has given you!

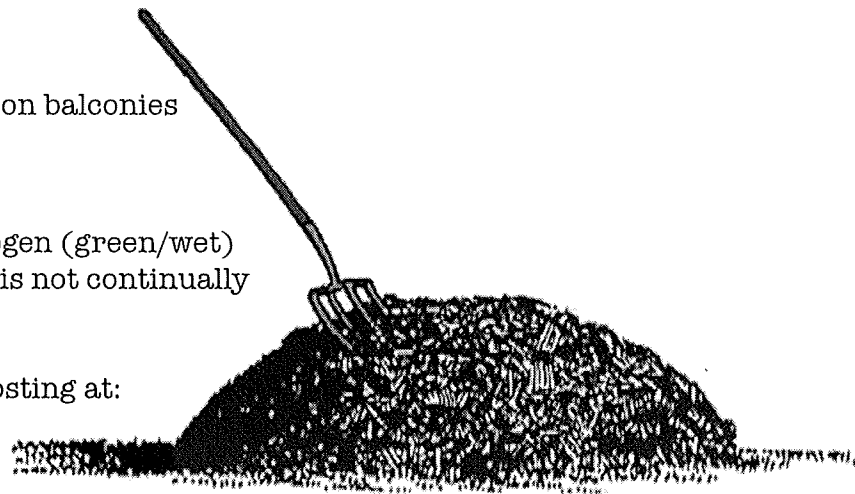
### What if you live in an apartment or condo?

There are plastic compost bins with lids that are specially designed for use on balconies and under sinks.

### What about odors?

Odors are present when there is a lack of air or an imbalance between nitrogen (green/wet) and carbon (brown/dry). Rebalance the pile, aerate, make sure the bottom is not continually waterlogged and that should do it!

The City of Springfield also provides useful information on backyard composting at:  
[http://www.springfield-ma.gov/DPW/yard\\_composting.O.html](http://www.springfield-ma.gov/DPW/yard_composting.O.html)



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## **Carbon-rich matter**

(brown or dry matter)

Dry leaves  
Straw/hay  
Sawdust  
Coffee grounds (including filters)  
Tea leaves (including bags)  
Napkins  
Paper (recycling is recommended)  
Pasta  
Bread  
Rice  
Peanut shells  
Fruit pits  
Natural fibres (cotton, linen, wool, untreated leather...)

## **Nitrogen-rich matter**

(green or wet matter)

Fruit and Vegetable scraps (even rotten)  
Egg shells  
Fresh grass clippings  
Fresh weed clippings

## **Material that should not be composted**

Meat and Fish  
Oil (fat)  
Bones  
Dairy products  
Rhubarb leaves (stalks too)  
Weeds that have gone to seed with roots  
Treated grass  
Diseased plants or leaves  
Wood ashes  
BBQ briquettes  
Animal or human excrements  
(can contain pathogens)  
Vacuum dust  
Materials contaminated by pesticides  
or other dangerous products (ex. : treated wood)  
Large quantities of waterlogged material

