

Start composting this summer

Compost is a decayed mixture of plants that is used to improve the soil in your garden, plants and yard. You can make compost in your backyard or indoors.

Simple steps for backyard composting

- **Select suitable space and size** - Select a dry, shady, or partly shady spot near a water source and preferably out of sight. Ideally, the compost area should be at least one cubic yard in size.
- **Get a bin or start a pile** - A pile works great for just leaves and grass clippings, but when you want to incorporate food waste, it's time to use a bin to prevent rodents and pets from invading. You can [build your own bin](#) or purchase one [online](#) or at retail locations. You'll need a [kitchen compost bin](#) so you can collect and store your food waste before taking it to your backyard pile.
- **Mix it right** - There are four types of ingredients you need to make great compost: browns for carbon, greens for nitrogen, air for organisms, and water for moisture. Mix as follows:
 1. Add your brown and green materials (generally three parts browns to one part greens), making sure larger pieces are chopped or shredded.
 2. Every time you add to the pile, turnover and fluff it with a pitchfork or shovel to provide aeration, unless your bin has a turner.
 3. During dry weather, add water to keep the pile moist. A good rule-of-thumb is the sponge test: your compost should have the consistency and moisture content of a wrung-out sponge when you squeeze it.
- **Use it!** - When material at the bottom of your compost bin is dark and rich in color, with no remnants of your food or yard waste, your compost is ready to be added to your gardens, lawn, shrubs and trees.

Simple steps for indoor composting

- **Get a bin** – Two options for indoor composting are [vermicomposting](#) and [bokashi composting](#). Vermicomposting uses earthworms to convert food waste into compost. Bokashi composting involves fermenting food waste.
- **Use it!** – If you don't have an outdoor space to use your compost, use it for houseplants, give it to friends and family members, or contact a nearby community garden.

Don't want to compost at home? No problem!

You can take your food scraps to [Kansas City's Residential Composting Program at URBAVORE](#) and they'll compost it for you.

What can go in my compost bin?	
Yes	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Raw or cooked fruits and vegetables• Bread and grains• Coffee grounds and filters• Grass clippings• Paper tea bags• Hair and fur	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Metal• Glass• Plastic• Dairy products• Fats, grease, lard, or oils• Greasy or oily foods

- Chicken, rabbit, cow, horse manure
- Cotton or wool rags
- Dryer and vacuum cleaner lint
- Eggshells
- Nut shells
- Fireplace ashes (from wood burning)
- Sawdust
- Hay and straw
- Yard trimmings (e.g., leaves, branches, twigs)
- Houseplants
- Used potting soil
- Wood chips
- Leaves
- Shredded newspaper
- Cardboard rolls
- Clean paper

- Meat or seafood scraps
- Bones and shells
- Pet wastes (e.g., dog or cat feces, soiled cat litter)
- Soiled diapers
- Stickers from fruits or vegetables
- Black walnut tree leaves or twigs
- Yard trimmings treated with chemical pesticides
- Roots of perennial weeds
- Coal or charcoal ash
- Firestarter logs
- Treated, stained or painted wood