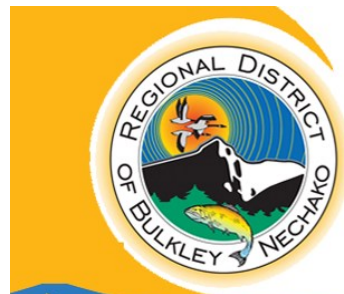
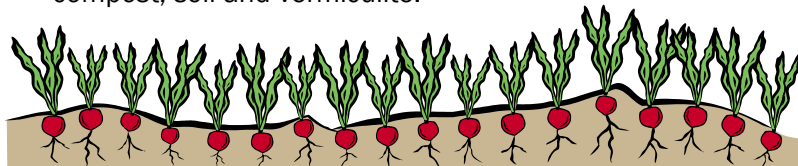


Compost Troubleshooting

What's Wrong?	Why?	Try This
Compost smells bad	Not enough air is getting to the compost	Turn the pile and add more dry brown material
The middle of the pile is dry	Not enough water, too much woody material	Add water while turning the pile. Add fresh material
The pile is attracting ants	Food scraps are not buried well enough. Pile is too dry	Add water while turning
The pile is damp and sweet smelling but it is not heating up	Not enough nitrogen	Mix in nitrogen-rich material like grass clippings or high-nitrogen fertilizer
There are flies around the compost pile	Food scraps are exposed, not enough brown material	Put food scraps in centre of bin, cover with soil or brown material
Mould is growing in the compost	The compost is too wet	Add dry material

How to Use your Finished Compost

- Use it in your garden. Mixing soil compost with soil helps to improve its texture, increase nutrient levels and improve water holding capacity.
- Use it as top dressing. Spread compost to a depth of 8 cm around the base of shrubs, trees and perennials.
- Use it to feed your lawn. Hand cast or rake a layer of sifted compost over the surface of the lawn to a depth of 1/2 cm.
- Use it to make potting soil. Mix equal parts of sifted compost, soil and vermiculite.



What About Bears?

It is important to be bear-conscious before starting a backyard composting project. A smelly compost pile can be a major attractant to bears. To reduce the risk of bears or any other pests getting into your compost, follow the guidelines in this brochure. Minimize odours by providing the best conditions possible for rapid decomposition. Here are some tips:

- Make sure your compost has an adequate amount of “brown” material. This helps keep odours at bay.
- Keep a heavy, secure lid on your compost bin.
- Keep in mind that no compost bin is completely bear-proof. If a bear does get into your compost, an alternative location or method may be needed.

Composting in the Winter

Although the decomposition process slows down in cooler weather, compost piles can keep working all year long if the right conditions are provided. By stockpiling dead leaves and dry grass clippings in the fall, you will be able to continue layering “browns” and “greens” throughout the winter. This ensures the right ratio of carbon to nitrogen, helps aerate and provides adequate drainage in the pile, which will contribute to next spring's compost harvest. Turning the pile in the winter is not necessary due to the loss of heat. Here are some more tips that may help increase your winter composting success:

- Insulate your bin by surrounding it with bags of leaves or hay bales;
- Cut up your food scraps into small pieces before putting them in the bin—smaller particles compost faster.

REGIONAL DISTRICT
OF BULKLEY NECHAKO

Backyard Composting Guide



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What is Composting?

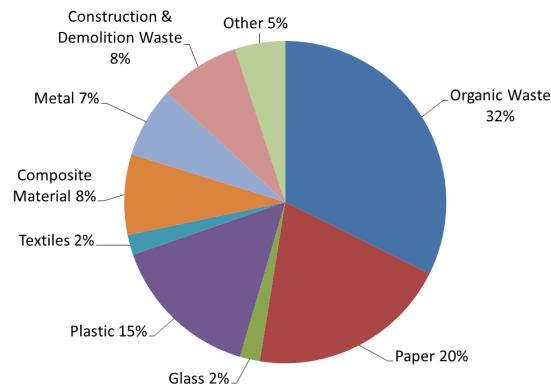
Composting is a natural process involving the decomposition of organic material (fruit and vegetable scraps, leaves, grass clippings) into a soil-like product called compost or humus. The process works with the help of micro-organisms, such as bacteria and fungi, combined with air and moisture.



Why Compost?

- Over 30% of the household waste sent to the landfill is organic matter, which can be composted. Composting is a great way to minimize waste and save landfill space.
- Composting is good for the garden. It produces a rich natural soil supplement that improves plant growth and reduces soil erosion.
- Composting is easy and inexpensive. All you need is a little bit of space, a bin and a basic understanding of the composting process.

Household Waste Composition in the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako



Instructions

1. First, choose a flat, partly shady area of your backyard that has good drainage.
2. Purchase or construct a compost bin. Bins come in many shapes and sizes. An ideal compost bin size is one cubic metre to best retain heat. Make sure your bin has a lid.



3. Start by layering 6-10 cm of straw, leaves or woody brushy material at the base of your compost bin. This promotes air circulation.
4. Fill your bin with alternating layers of green nitrogen-rich material (kitchen scraps, fresh grass clippings) and brown carbon-rich material (leaves, dry grass clippings, shredded newspaper). Chop up materials for faster decomposition.
5. Mix compost every one or two weeks. This will aerate the compost and allow the contents to generate heat, speeding up decomposition. You can use a “wingdigger”, broom handle or pitchfork.
6. Continue adding layers of new material, making sure the moisture content of the compost is like a wrung out dish cloth. Add water if the compost is too dry.
7. When the material at the bottom of the bin is dark and rich in colour, with no remnants of food or yard waste, the compost is ready to use! This process generally takes 2-3 months, or longer.
8. Dig out the compost with a shovel, either using the door at the bottom of your bin, or removing the newer layers and digging out the finished compost from the center. There may be a few chunks of woody material left. These can be screened out and put back into the top of the pile.

Compost Layering



What Can Be Composted?

Green (nitrogen-rich) Material	Brown (carbon-rich) Material
Fruit and vegetable scraps	Dried leaves
Coffee grounds and tea bags	Dry grass clippings
Fresh grass clippings	Straw
Disease-free plant remains	Woody brush (small pieces)
Old flowers	Shredded newspaper, paper towels and paper bags

Other Items: Egg shells, (rinse and crush)

Unacceptable Material

- × Grease, cooked food including rice, pasta, oils
- × Fish, meat, bones
- × Dog or cat feces
- × Kitty litter
- × Barbeque ash or coals
- × Roots of perennial weeds

These items attract rodents and pests, cause odour problems, and may contain chemicals or disease organisms.