

Creating a Compost Pile

Written by RSF

Tuesday, April 07, 2009 - 01:55 -

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Creating a Compost Pile

- Establish a location for the pile. It should be close to the garden but also convenient to your kitchen
- Dig a pit about 4x4 or 4x5 feet and about 1 to 2 feet deep (This step is optional but having the pile start out in a pit helps keep in moisture). Don't dig a pit if the drainage in the area is poor.
- Add an 8 to 10 inch layer of organic material like kitchen scraps, leaves, grass clippings, or seed-free weeds. It's a good idea to have a relatively even mix of green and brown materials (like grass clippings and dried leaves).
- Cover the first layer with a thin layer of soil
- Water thoroughly, but not to the point of making it soggy
- Add more layers of organic material, alternating with thin layers of solid and watering between layers, until the pile is about 4 or 5 feet high
- Let it sit for a month or two
- Keep the soil moist. If it's very hot or if there's no rain, water the pile occasionally, but be sure it never becomes soggy
- Cover the pile with a tarp if you get heavy rains for more than a day or two in a row
- After 2 months, and then once a month for 3 to 5 months, turn over the pile with a pitch

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fork or a special “compost screw”

- With each turn, check to see that the pile is “cooking”. It should feel warm to the touch

- When the material in the pile looks like soil, it’s ready to use in the garden

You could also consider a commercial compost bin or tumbler that works faster than a traditional pile.