Composting at home

Quick Start Guide

Step 1: Choose a location

When picking a spot for your home compost pile, make sure it is:

- Easy to access year-round
- Free of standing water

Step 2: Stock up on browns

Browns are dry plant materials. To compost year-round, you will need to gather a volume of browns roughly the size of your bin or the pile you would like your compost pile to be.

Step 3: Layer greens with those browns

It's time to start composting. As you have food scraps and fresh yard waste, add them to your pile and cover them with browns. Layers should be 4 inches deep or less. The general guideline is 3 parts brown for every 1 part green.

Troubleshooting

Too smelly?

- Not enough air, or too much green. Mix pile and or/add brown material.

Too Slow?

- Not enough water. Moisten and mix pile.

Damp and warm only in the center?

- Pile is too small. Collect more materials to mix in the pile

Pile is damp and sweet smelling, but not hot

- Not enough greens. Mix in more green materials, including grass clippings or weeds.

Fruit flies everywhere

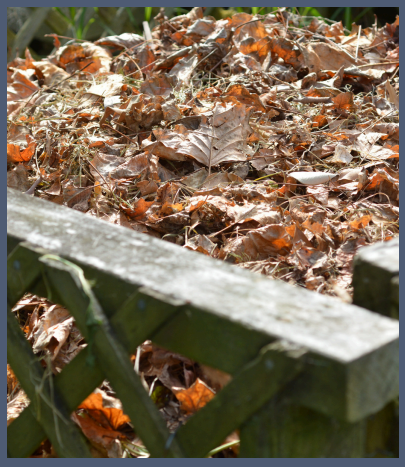
- Too much green. Mix the pile and add more brown material to the top.

Need more help/advice?

Contact us at solid.waste@lenawee.mi.us or call 517-264-4511.

Containing your compost

You can buy or build a compost bin, as long as it has an open bottom. Or, don't contain it at all! Loose composting piles also work.



Browns

- Dry leaves
- Wood chips
- Shredded paper
- Paper towels and toilet paper tubes
- Stray or hay
- Cardboard
- Paper bags
- Sawdust

Greens

- Fruit and vegetable scraps
- Coffee Grounds
- Tea bags (with no plastic)
- Eggshells
- Plant scraps
- Grass clippings
- Flowers

Do not use

- Whole branches or logs
- Pet or human waste
- Charcoal briquette ash
- Sawdust from treated wood
- Meat or Dairy

LENAWEE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT