



DISCOVER THE ROWES BAY *Sustainability Centre*

Don't let your foods life go to waste... Compost it!

Nature's Recycling System

Composting is transforming food scraps and organic matter into fertiliser - a useful by product. This recycling method can reduce your household rubbish by 50%, reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill and save you money!



Why Compost?

Composting at home is inexpensive and easy.
Its benefits include:

- Reduced the amount of waste sent to landfill (approximately 40 to 60% of household waste is compostable)
- Reduces the production of methane, a powerful greenhouse gas;
- Compost is a super fertiliser. Organic material provides essential nutrients to help grow strong plant
- Improves soil health and structure, ensuring your soil holds the correct amount of moisture and nutrients.
- Reduced dependence on artificial fertilisers and pesticides; and
- It can save you money!

In Townsville, composting improves the texture of our clay and sandy soils, making our soil type rich, moisture retentive and loamy.

Ways of composting:

Direct composting

Bury vegetable matter in holes in the ground, deeper than 10cm. Create small piles away from plants with young root systems.

Compost Bins

Keep compost bins in contact with the ground, so that worms can escape the heat generated by the bin.

Compost tumblers

Tumblers are a faster way of composting, but you need to turn your compost at least once a day and add manure to the mix.

Worm farms

Worm farms are easy to set up and a great way to involve the kids. Feed worms weekly and make sure they can retreat into an area away from their food.

A Well-Balanced Diet

Most organic material can be composted. Your composter will perform best when it has a balanced diet. Add a diverse range of both nitrogen and carbon-rich materials to your compost bin to produce beautiful, nutrient-rich compost.

What you can compost:

Nitrogen-rich kitchen waste



Vegetable scraps



Fruit scraps



Egg shells



Rice and pasta



Coffee grounds



Plant cuttings

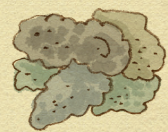
Carbon-rich kitchen waste



Paper



Stale bread



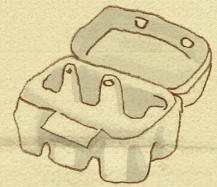
Dryer lint



Hair



Cereal cartons



Egg cartons

Nitrogen-rich garden waste



Grass
(small amounts)



Flowers



Vegetables

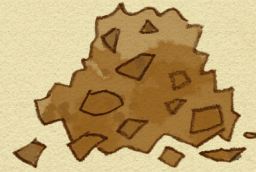


Plant trimmings

Carbon-rich garden waste



Twigs



Wood chips



Straw



Ash from BBQ



Leaves

What you can't compost:

- ✗ Dairy Products
- ✗ Diseased Plants and Weeds
- ✗ Sauces
- ✗ Dog and Cat Waste

- ✗ Meat, fish or bones
- ✗ Oils and fats
- ✗ Glossy Magazines
- ✗ Citrus peels, onion and garlic

Placing and setting up your compost bin

- The compost bin should be sealed to prevent pests, but easy and convenient to access.
- Select a well-drained spot and cut out the sod under the composter. This will speed up the process by improving drainage, and inviting worms and microbes in to work their magic.
- Start with a layer of dried leaves, branches and mulch. This material will allow good drainage.
- Water this layer well.
- Add 2-3 shovels of finished compost or 'live' soil from your garden.
- Add 15cm layer of green garden waste and another layer of soil from your garden.
- Add food scraps from your kitchen tidy bin (chop bulky items into smaller pieces). Busy food scraps near the centre of the pile.
- Cover any exposed food scraps with carbon-rich materials like leaves to prevent unwanted insects.
- Remember to keep your compost moist (but not wet) with water, tea and coffee grounds or grey water from the shower.
- Aerate your compost by turning it with a garden fork once a week.



Maintaining your compost

When managing your compost always keep in mind the A.D.A.M principle:

Aliveness	Compost is a living system. It is full of good bacteria, microbes, fungi, worms and other creatures. They are all important for decomposing organic waste and creating healthy soil.
Diversity	Diversity is an important feature of all natural systems and also in compost. Compost needs a diverse range of ingredients to achieve a good balance of nutrients.
Air	Compost needs air to break down properly as the good bacteria in the compost are aerobic. Airflow will also prevent your compost from smelling bad, keeping odours at bay. Aerate your compost by turning it at least once every two weeks.
Moisture	All living things need water. Your compost should be kept moist (but not wet) to help break down faster.

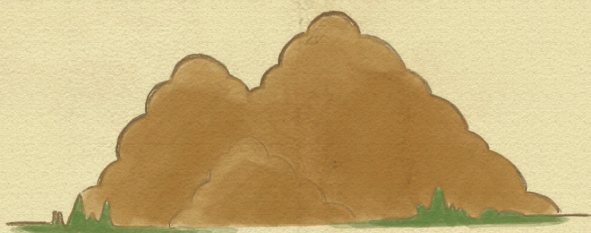


COMPOST IS A
LIVING SYSTEM!



Harvesting your compost

- Your compost is ready to use when it is a rich dark colour and has a mild earthy smell.
- Carefully lift the compost bin up off the pile.
- Remove any unfinished compost and set aside.
- Use the finished compost as desired.
- Replace the compost bin in its original place.



Using compost on your garden!

Compost is especially important for plants in garden beds, wicking beds and pots because these plants do not have access to any additional food except what was originally in the soil.

There are many ways to apply your compost. Some of these include:

- Layering your compost over the soil of your garden bed like mulch.
- Preparing the garden bed by mixing compost into your soil a couple of weeks before planting.
- Combining 4 parts compost with 1 part shredded sphagnum moss and 2 parts river sand to make your own special homemade potting mix.

Compost Troubleshooting

Problem	Cause	Solution
Compost smells	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Too Wet• Insufficient oxygen	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Turn compost more often to increase aeration.• Add more carbon-rich material to provide air pockets.• Sprinkle with dolomite to reduce acidity.
Compost is attracting vermin	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Too acidic• Meat, fish, dairy or faeces in compost• Too much bread in compost• Insufficient moisture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Place chicken wire under bin.• Cover compost with a damp hessian sack or newspaper.• Keep the compost moist – vermin do not like a damp environment.• Turn compost more often.• Sprinkle with dolomite.• Reduce the amount of meat, fish, dairy and bread in compost.
Slow decomposition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Insufficient oxygen• Insufficient moisture• Unbalanced mix of ingredients• Cold weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Add more nitrogen-rich materials e.g. manure, grass clippings.• Check moisture and add water if required – dry compost will not heat up• Turn compost more often• Sprinkle with dolomite

For more information visit:
www.townsville.qld.gov.au