

# Discover the Compost Garden

Composting is the natural process by which organic material decomposes into a rich, soil-like material called humus, which is often referred to as "black gold." Adding compost to soil promotes healthy plant growth, and healthy plants don't require as much pesticide spraying. In addition, composting may reduce household garbage by 25 percent.

## Look for:

- Bins contain compost in various stages of decomposition. Materials in the bins include:
  - Kitchen scraps (fruit, vegetables, coffee grounds and filters, tea bags, etc.)
  - Grass and garden clippings
  - Leaves
  - Shredded woody yard debris (twigs, small branches, bark, etc.)
  - Other organic material, including newsprint (not glossy)
- The screening table ensures plant pieces are small enough for easier consumption by microbes.
- The wood chipper shreds small branches, twigs, and leaves, which makes the materials break down even faster in the composting process.
- The aerator creates air pockets needed for effective decomposition because the soil microorganisms doing the work of decomposition need oxygen to survive. Without air, stinky bacteria proliferate, and the beneficial microbes die.

## Garden Tips:

- Use a large bucket or wheelbarrow to mix together one part "green material" to two parts "brown material."
- Add water as necessary to maintain proper moisture (damp like a wrung-out sponge).
- Aerate the pile and continue to keep moist; continue adding green and brown material.
- Turn these materials once they are in layers to ensure the center of the pile gets oxygen to support beneficial decomposing soil microbes.

