WASTE FACTS

- The statewide recycling rate is 43.5%
- Food waste is another 11% of what we throw away. Much of this can be composted at home.
- Organic materials comprise 25.4% of statewide residential waste (most of which is compostable).
- Paper products make up 30.8% of statewide residential waste and should be recycled or composted.
- The amount of solid waste generated in Minnesota over the last 5 years grew twice as fast as our population.

- Currently, each person in Minnesota creates about 7 pounds of waste per day. That’s enough to fill the Metrodome 11 times each year!
- Space is limited: Minnesota ships waste to neighboring state landfills.

MINNESOTA

COMPOST HAPPENS

HOW?

Organic material is processed (for FREE!) by numerous decomposers such as bacteria, fungi, snails, slugs, millipedes, sow bugs, pills bugs, mites, earthworms, flatworms, winged beetles, spring tails, centipedes, rove beetles, and ants and spiders. These common compost critters all function to help create compost!

OH NO! PROBLEM SOLVING

WHAT IF...

The pile smells like rotten eggs?
- Not enough air, too much water
- Add brown material like dry leaves
- Pile should be damp like a wrung out sponge
- Turn more frequently

The pile smells like ammonia?
- Too much nitrogen (greens), not enough air
- Add dry leaves, sawdust or straw
- Turn more frequently

Facts provided by the Solid Waste Management Coordinating Board
WHAT IS COMPOST?
com•post/ˈkämpəst/: decayed organic material used as a plant fertilizer

WHY SHOULD I COMPOST?
Composting restores valuable nutrients to the ground. In essence, composting reduces or voids the need for man-made and chemical fertilizers and pesticides for a healthier garden.

HOW DO I COMPOST?
Compost needs 3 essential ingredients: Green material (weeds, vegetable trimmings, egg shells), brown material (leaves, wood chips, paper) and sufficient moisture.

You want the pile to remain damp, but not dripping wet. Turn the pile about once a week by shoveling the outside towards the middle and continue moving until the fresh compost is now exposed. You will know that your compost pile is right if it becomes hot in the middle and it smells earthy. If your pile heats up, gets moisture, and gets turned regularly, you should have dark, wonderful compost in about one–two months time.

Did you know that grass clippings are a great source of nitrogen for your compost pile? Usually you have more clippings than needed for composting so just leave the rest on your lawn! Leaving the clippings returns nutrients to the soil.

WHAT CAN BE COMPOSTED?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Green material (e.g., grass, leaves, yard waste)</th>
<th>Brown material (e.g., wood, paper)</th>
<th>Sufficient moisture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- Shredded Paper/Newspaper
- Grass, Leaves & Yard Waste
- Bread/Pasta/Crackers
- Coffee Grounds/Filters
- Tea Leaves/Bags
- Coooked & Raw Fruits & Vegetables

WHAT CAN’T BE COMPOSTED?

- Disease or Insect Infested Plants
- Evergreen Needles, Poison Ivy and other Poisonous Plants
- Weeds that Contain Seeds
- Meat & Animal Products
- Fatty Foods/Dairy Products
- Oi•/Grease/Fatty Foods
- Cat and Dog Manure

FINISHED COMPOST

Compost is complete when it is dark, crumbly, and has an earthy smell.

Avoid using unfinished compost, as organic acids may harm plant roots.

If compost is still hot, smells like ammonia or you can still identify much of the organic material it is not ready to use yet.

The volume of finished compost will have been reduced by 30-50 percent.

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BUILDING YOUR COMPOST PILE

The recommended size for a home compost pile is no smaller than 3 feet x 3 feet x 3 feet, and no larger than 5 feet x 5 feet x 5 feet. A smaller pile may not heat up high enough for efficient breakdown, or it may lose heat and quickly slow down the process. A larger pile may hold too much water not allowing air into the center.