



Backyard Composting Ingredient List

Browns



Dry, high in carbon and slow to break down
50% of pile by volume

<u>Item</u>	<u>Warnings/Precautions</u>
Bark	None
Cardboard	Mix thoroughly with other ingredients to avoid matting. No waxed cardboard. (It is best to place cardboard in the recycle bin)
Coffee filters	None
Cornstalks	Very slow to decompose
Cotton fabric/string	None
Dryer lint	None
Hay and straw	Mix thoroughly with other ingredients to avoid matting
Mixed paper, junk mail, bills, paper towels napkins	Don't use envelopes with plastic windows (Paper should be shred into one inch strips)
Newspaper	Only use newspaper printed with soy-based ink. Mix thoroughly with other ingredients to avoid matting. (It is best to place newspaper in the recycle bin)
Nuts	None
Pine needles	Very slow to decompose
Pruning from trees	None
Sawdust	Don't use painted, treated or artificial lumber
Tea bags	None
Wallboards	Don't use vinyl/paper wallboard
Wood chips	None
Wood ash	Use small amounts. Don't use if it is from painted, treated or artificial lumber
Woody waste (2x4 etc.)	Slow to decompose. Don't use if it is from painted, treated or artificial lumber

Greens



Fresh, high in nitrogen, contains moisture, breaks down quickly
50% of pile by volume

<u>Item</u>	<u>Warnings/Precautions</u>
Coffee grounds	Whole coffee beans can cause odor
Egg shells	None
Feathers	None
Flowers	None
Whole fruit, vegetables	Bury food 12" deep to avoid pests
Green weeds	Use before going to seed
Grass clippings	Mix thoroughly with other ingredients to avoid matting and odor. Avoid using clippings for a month after the lawn has been treated with pesticides.
Hair: human/animal	Mix thoroughly with other ingredients to avoid matting
House Plants	Don't use if diseased or infested
Manure	Mix thoroughly with other ingredients to avoid odors
Tea leaves	None

Preparation of Ingredients

Break, chop, crumble or cut the material into pieces that are no thicker than your little finger and no longer than six inches (6") in length. This will provide the organisms more open surface area for penetration to begin decomposing material. Smaller material size makes turning and mixing the pile easier.





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Ingredients to Avoid

-  Ash from coal and charcoal
-  Chicken, fish, meat and bones
-  Newspaper with color ink (glossy, petroleum based inks)
-  Computer paper (white or color)
-  Dairy products, fat, grease or oil
-  Diseased or infested plant material
-  Dog or cat feces (heat from pile will not kill pathogens)
-  Ivies
-  Invasive plants
-  Kitty litter
-  Pet food
-  Poisonous plants
-  Sawdust
-  Sewage sludge
-  Thorny plants
-  Urine
-  Wallboard with vinyl on one side and paper on the other

Resources

California Department of Resources, Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle). Free plans to build compost bins at: www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/Publications/Details/347

Home Composting Made Easy by C. Forrest McDowell, PhD and Tricia Clark-McDowell (Cortesia Press)

Let It Rot by Stu Campbell (Storey Book 3rd Edition)

The Rodale Book of Composting by Gracy Gershuny and Deborah I. Martin (Rodale Press)

Low cost compost bins are available.
For more information, visit:
www.rcwaste.org/composting/bins



14310 Frederick St., Moreno Valley, CA 92553
951-486-3200 or 800-366-SAVE

www.rcwaste.org

