

Create a Compost Pile in Your Yard

Brown + Green = 'Black Gold'

Humus (Compost) improves your soil no matter what it needs. Many native plants have adapted to poor soil, so they may need less humus than non-native plants.

Standard synthetic fertilizers may kill Beneficial insects, are generally toxic to soil life forms and often get washed into our groundwater, rivers and lakes. Landfills are packed down and materials decompose without oxygen – a process that spews methane (a highly potent greenhouse gas) into the atmosphere.

Create compost Mother Nature's way:

1. Green (Nitrogen): Untreated grass clippings
2. Brown (Carbon): Dirt, Dead leaves, Pine needles
3. Alternate thin layers (2"-6") approx balanced by weight (maximum of 3' cubed, less deep is more efficient)
4. Consistency should be like a damp sponge; if not, sprinkle with water
5. Leave it without turning for a year

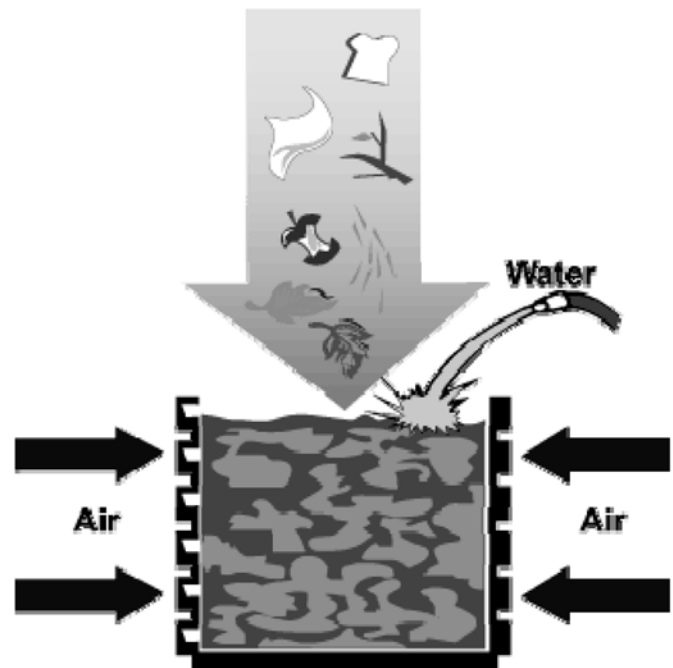
Important! Keep your lawn and garden chemical free. Use organic fertilizer & manually control pests. Chemicals kill Beneficial bugs that keep your yard's pests in balance naturally.

Tips:

- Put the compost pile in an out-of-the-way place where it is hidden from your neighbors' view
- Plant a vine for decorative purposes
- Keep some leaves aside to add in summer when there are more grass clippings
- No need to add worms, if you build it, they will come

- Send Invasive plants (non-native plants that harm natural places) to the trash – see www.oipc.info (Ohio Invasive Plants Council)
- Don't include toxic plants

If you become comfortable with your compost pile, you can learn more about using additional materials and creating a container for your 'Black Gold' from the resources listed below.



© Patty Glick, National Wildlife Federation

Resources:

www.compostguide.com

www.resourceconservation.mb.ca

Click on How to Compost

www.marquisproject.com/composting101

<http://cgee.hamline.edu/watershed/action>

Click on Service-Learning Projects, then Compost leaves and grass