



HOW TO COMPOST

Let's get your composter started!

Where do I put my composter?

Place it in a sunny spot. The sun's warmth will speed up the breakdown of organics.

What about rodents, deer, and bears?

The bin is fully enclosed to keep animals out, but ideally it would be kept in a fenced-in yard, or tucked beside a shed or garage for extra protection.

How do I compost?

Layer your bin with greens and browns. **Greens** add nitrogen; **Browns** add carbon.

Greens are vegetables, fruit, coffee grounds, grass, eggshells and tea leaves.

Hint—cut up scraps; this makes your pile decompose faster.

Browns are leaves, cardboard (pizza boxes are okay—a little oil will not hurt), shredded newspaper, ashes, sawdust, hair, cotton or wool fabric.

How do I layer?

Make a base layer using branches or pieces of wood, make a crosshatch/log cabin style platform. This lets in the oxygen to feed the microorganisms which will digest your pile. Then add a layer of browns; then greens and continue to alternate.

The ratio of browns to greens should be 2:1 or 3:1 (i.e. the brown layer is twice or three times as thick as the green layer). Composting is not an exact science.

Should my pile be wet or dry?

Keep your compost moist, but not wet. **Remember** greens are wet; browns are dry. You need your pile moist not wet. You will know if it's too wet because it will start to smell. If this happens, add more browns.

Should I turn my pile?

Turning your pile adds oxygen which speeds up organic breakdown.

No time to turn your pile?

Some people rarely turn their compost pile. Do it as often as you are able. Remember, turning adds oxygen and speeds up decomposition.



When is my compost ready?

It will almost have the consistency of soil but rougher in texture. Before adding to a garden, some people sift their compost to remove undigested scraps, stones, twigs and tea bags.

Can I compost in the winter?

Yes - your pile will freeze but that freezing breaks down organics. In the spring, you will see your pile has shrunk to one third of its size.

I have no garden, what can I do with my compost?

Make a container garden and mix compost into the soil, spread your compost on your lawn, or give it away to gardener friends.

What about bones and meat?

Bones—yes; meat—no/maybe. Meat attracts animals. However, small amounts should be no problem. Bones will take a long time to disintegrate. Some heat bones in their oven and then spread the broken-down particles —bone meal — on their gardens.

Can I put my Foodcycler compost in my compost?

Yes, the Foodcycler breaks down meat and other scraps.

Can I put weeds in my compost?

Yes, but remove seed heads. Stems and roots are fine. Dandelions have lots of nutrients.

What about flies?

Fruit flies and other insects are beneficial and help break down your compost pile. Bacteria and worms are other good workers.



Want to learn more?

Scan the QR codes for additional resources.

Sustainability Action Plan



How Composting is Made



Carbon/Nitrogen Explained



Have more questions? You can email us at communications@kenora.ca and a member of the Sustainability Advisory Committee will be in touch!

This Information Sheet is presented by Kenora's Sustainability Advisory Committee.

A Note About Composting Yard Waste

Brown, fallen leaves are far from lifeless—they're vital nurseries for insects. Beneath that layer of leaf litter, butterfly larvae develop, while insects, microbes, and worms find food and shelter. Leaving leaves and plant debris in your yard increases biodiversity and helps strengthen pollinator populations that will support your garden later in the season.

Spring's warmer days naturally draw us outside, eager to tackle yard clean-up after a long winter. But while that first sunny afternoon may feel like the start of gardening season, many pollinators aren't ready to emerge just yet. This spring, consider giving your rake a break.

Raking has become a routine yard chore, but it can unintentionally destroy critical habitat for pollinators that overwinter close to home. While monarch butterflies famously migrate thousands of kilometres from Canada to Mexico to escape winter, many other insect species stay put and survive the cold right here. Some may become active in early April, but others remain tucked away until the consistently warmer days of May.

You may spot bumble bees and ground-nesting bees as early-flowering trees and shrubs begin to bloom, but they still rely on leaf cover for protection from cold nights and heavy spring rains. Once temperatures have truly warmed and pollinators have emerged to forage, that's the right time to compost your yard waste—and give nature a helping hand.

For more information on supporting pollinators in your garden, scan the QR Code:

