

# Composting throughout the Seasons

**Compost is what you get when yard and garden debris, kitchen scraps and other organic materials have completely broken down into a rich, dark, crumbly material gardeners call “Black Gold”.**

## Spring

- Thoroughly aerate your pile and add browns if needed, if you have finished compost spread the compost on your lawn or garden.
- If you have been collecting “green” compostables over the winter, now is the time to add some “browns” for balance. Save some leaves from your spring yard clean-up to add to the compost bin.

## Summer

- As you add kitchen or fresh plant waste to the pile, cover with leaves, other brown material or soil.
- Aerate or stir the pile regularly. For optimal results, mix or turn the pile three to five times per season for a wooden bin or one to two time per month for a plastic bin, using a pitchfork, garden hoe, shovel or compost aerator.
- Leave grass clippings on the lawn. They add nutrients and help retain soil moisture.

## Fall

- Harvest finished compost. If desired, empty the bin and move it to a convenient spot nearer the house. You will want to have it handy during the winter.
- Collect and set aside a good supply of fallen leaves to add over the winter or when the pile thaws in the spring. This will supply “brown” material to your compost throughout spring and summer.
- Use any leftover leaves as mulch on garden beds or underneath large trees.

## Winter

- Don't stop composting. Keep adding kitchen scraps to the pile even during the coldest weather. The regular freeze-thaw cycle aids in breaking down the cellular structure of materials and speeds the process along when warmer weather returns.
- When you add materials in winter, cover them with the leaves you set aside. Or wait until the pile thaws in the spring, and mix in leaves or other brown material.

**Examples of Greens:** Fruits, vegetables, peels, cores, tea bags, coffee grounds, egg shells (rinsed and crushed), rice, pasta, house plants cuttings, grass clippings (a bit at a time), sod (small pieces), pulled weeds (no seeds), hedge clippings

**Examples of Browns:** Coffee filters, nut shells, stale bread, brown paper bags (shredded), pet hair, dried grass clippings, dried weed, leaves, straw, hay, twigs, branches (mulched), pine needles (small quantities)

