



# COMPOSTING

## *for Kids !*

by Robert "Skip" Richter  
County Extension Director - Travis County  
Texas AgriLife Extension Service.



Composting is fun!  
It's also easy.  
Let's learn about  
how we make  
compost and how  
we use it to grow  
beautiful gardens.







# *The Forest Floor*



Nature recycles leaves and plants.

In a forest, leaves fall forming mulch that protects the soil.

Over time they decompose into nutrients that feed forest plants.



You can recycle leaves and other  
plant materials at home by setting up  
a compost bin.

## *Making Compost in a Bin*







## Set Up the Bin

First select a spot to set up your bin. It should be out of the way but convenient to reach with plenty of room to work around. Some good places would be near your garden or in a back corner of the yard. It is also a good idea to choose a location close to a source of water.



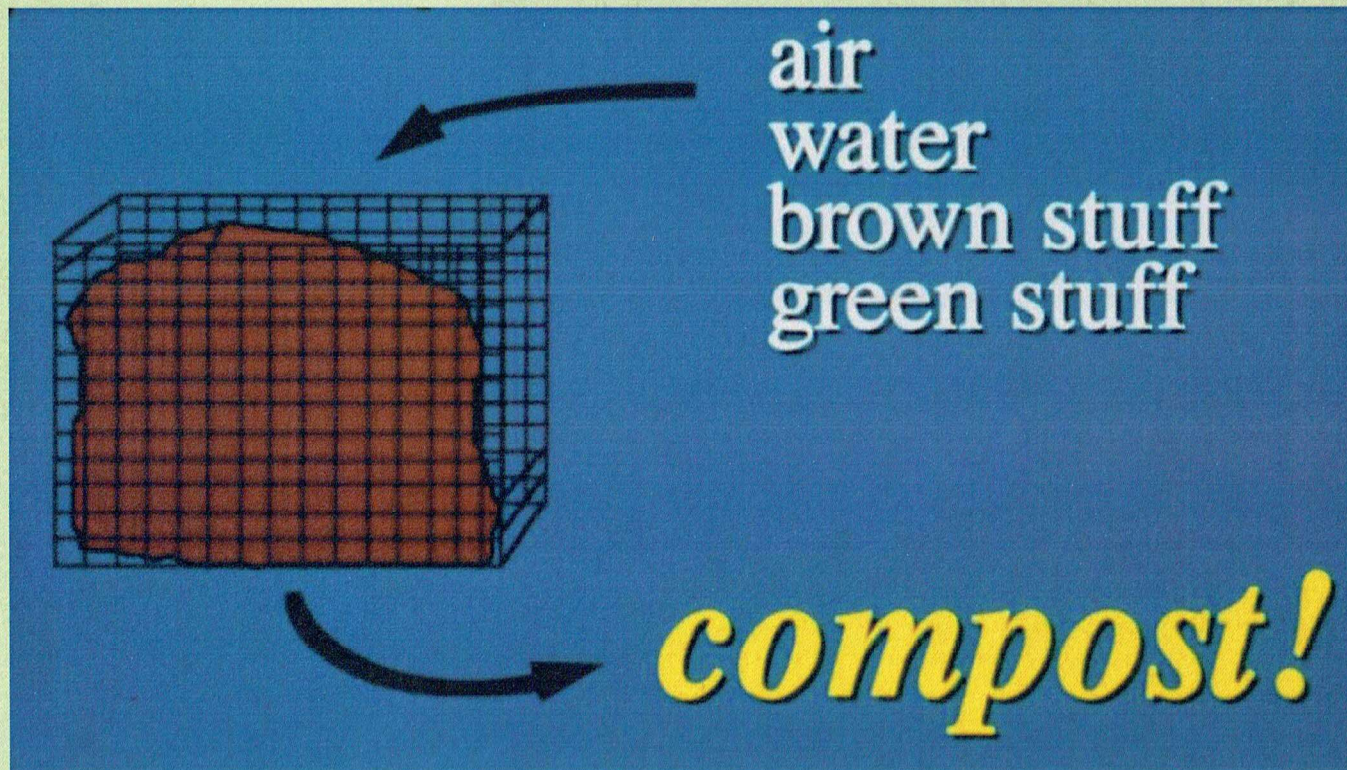
# Compost Recipe

Now for the recipe for compost. The micro-organisms that recycle leaves and other plant parts need an even mix of brown stuff and green stuff to munch on. They also need air and water to live and work. Put all this together and in time you will have compost!





# Recipe Ingredients







## Five

# Containers of Ingredients



Brown stuff is dead, dried plant parts like leaves and pine needles. Brown stuff is high in the element *carbon*. Green stuff is fresh, living parts like grass clippings, kitchen vegetable scraps, weeds and other plants. Green stuff is high in the element *nitrogen*.



# Don't Use



- ◆ Meat
- ◆ Fat
- ◆ Pet droppings
- ◆ Bones
- ◆ Milk
- ◆ Diseased plants
- ◆ Cheese
- ◆ Oils

Don't use meat, milk products because pets and other animals may try to dig them up out of your compost bin. Also don't use diseased garden plants. They can spread disease back into the garden later when you use the compost.



It is easiest to build our compost bin in layers of ingredients. Start with the brown stuff by spreading a layer of leaves or pine needles about 6 inches thick.



Leaves

Add







# Carbon Sources

Here are some sources of carbon along with their carbon-nitrogen ratio. You can use these numbers to better determine how much brown and green stuff you should use to make the best mix for composting. Some things, such as sawdust, are very high in carbon compared to their nitrogen content, while others, such as leaves, are not so high.



# Carbon Sources

- ◆ Dried leaves
- ◆ Pine needles
- ◆ Newspaper
- ◆ Sawdust

60:1  
90:1  
125:1  
625:1







## Add Grass Clippings

Next, for the green stuff, add a layer of grass clippings a few inches thick. It is helpful to mix the layers up a little as you make them.