Did you know that Compost can…

- Suppress plant diseases & pests.
- Reduce or eliminate the need for chemical fertilizers.
- Promote higher yields of agricultural crops.
- Facilitate reforestation, wetlands restoration, and habitat revitalization efforts by amending contaminated, compacted, and marginal soils.
- Cost-effectively remediate soils contaminated by hazardous waste.
- Remove solids, oil, grease, and heavy metals from storm water runoff.
- Capture and destroy 99.6 percent of industrial volatile organic chemicals (VOCs) in contaminated air.
- Provide cost savings of at least 50 percent over conventional soil, water, & air pollution remediation technologies, where applicable.

- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Why Not Put Yard Wastes in Landfills?

Since these materials are relatively clean and bio-degradable, disposal in landfills may be unnecessary and wastes space.
In addition, as yard wastes decompose in landfills, they generate methane gas and acidic leachate. Methane is a colorless, explosive greenhouse gas that is released as bacteria decompose organic materials in landfills. If methane is not controlled at a landfill, it can seep underground and into nearby buildings, where it has the potential to explode. Yard wastes also contribute acidity that can make other waste constituents more mobile and therefore more toxic. -EPA

Common Composting Problems

A. Strong Odors
Cause: Not enough air
Solution: Turn the compost weekly

B. Too Wet and Soggy
Cause: Too much water
Solution: Add dry grass or straw & turn the compost weekly

C. Wet and not Composting
Cause: Not enough Nitrogen
Solution: Add grass clippings or Nitrogen

D. Dry and Not Composting
Cause: Not enough water
Solution: Add grass clippings or Nitrogen based fertilizer & turn compost

E. Ammonia Smell
Cause: Too much Nitrogen
Solution: Add dry leaves, straw or sawdust & turn the compost weekly

F. Temperature of pile too
Cause: Poor ventilation
Solution: Turn the pile

G. Temperature of pile too low
Cause: Pile too small
Solution: Make pile bigger or insulate the sides

For Additional Information
East Central Recycling
765-282-1900

Home Composting

...A practical method of turning leaves, grass, weeds, and other organic materials into a valuable soil amendment

The Composting Process

Composting is a natural process that decomposes yard waste into rich humus. This humus returns usable "plant friendly" organic matter & nutrients to the soil.

Compost improves the water holding capacity, drainage, and workability of existing soils.

Composting involves micro-organisms, earth-worms, small insects, and small soil organisms which eat (decompose) organic yard waste.

The composting process requires carbon, nitrogen, water and oxygen to effectively work. (These organisms which break down raw compost need carbon for energy and nitrogen for the body structure.)

Organic wastes higher in carbon are: Paper, sawdust, woodchips, straw and leaves/ (Dried brown vegetation).

Organic wastes high in nitrogen are: Vegetable scraps, peelings, grass clippings, and farm manure. (Green fresh vegetation)

An organic carbon to nitrogen ratio best for composting is (30:1). (An example of this ratio is two parts fresh grass clippings mixed with one part brown leaves.)

What Can Be Composted?

Yard Waste:
-Leaves
-Grass Clippings
-Corn Stalks
-Straw and Hay
-Weeds (seed free)
-Cow and horse manure

Kitchen Waste:
-Fruit
-Tea Bags
-Vegetable peels
-Coffee grounds and filters
-Wood ash (wet)

What Can't Be Composted?

-Coal ash
-Treated lumber
-Large branches
-Mature weeds (gone to seed)
-Diseased and infested plants
-Pesticide treated leaves and grass
-Weeds spread by runners (i.e. Morning Glory, Quack Grass, and Buttercup)
-Pet manure
-Large pieces of wood

Also, Do Not compost any of the following kitchen wastes: meats, bones, dairy products, salad dressing, cooking oil, peanut butter, grease, and charcoal ashes**. These items attract rodents and flies.**

East Central Recycling

MUNCIE SANITARY DISTRICT SINCE 1965

How To Start Composting

(A.) First choose a composting bin or pile at least 3 ft. by 3 ft. to maintain proper composting temperature. (anything bigger than 5 ft. by 5 ft. does not allow the proper flow of oxygen).

(B.) Place (chopped or shredded) kitchen or yard wastes into the composting bin/pile.

(C.) Layer & mix the organic material with soil. Soil contains the micro-organisms & soil creatures "bugs" that do the work of turning organic matter into compost. (An inch to 1/2 inch layer of soil over the top of the compost will also keep the surface from drying out.)

(D.) Adjust the amount of water in your compost pile. Add dry straw, sawdust, or wood chips to a soggy pile...Add water to a pile that is too dry. The materials should be damp to the touch. (like a damp sponge.)

(E.) Allow the compost bin or pile to bake at 90° to 140°F. (this temperature should be reached in five to seven days.)

(F.) Turn the compost to give it oxygen as it bakes to speed up the composting process.

(G.) If a bin or pile is turned every week with the proper moisture & mix of materials, the compost should be ready to use in 2-3 months. If the material in your bin or pile is not turned, the compost should be ready in 10 or more months.

(H.) Compost is ready to use when it is dark & crumbly with a clean earthy smell. The original organic matter should not be identifiable.