

# Backyard Composting Class

## Why Compost?

### **Organic debris in the landfill contributes to climate change**

- ☐ Organics which decompose in the anaerobic (low oxygen) environment of a landfill creates methane
- ☐ Methane is a potent greenhouse gas which traps 84 times more heat than CO<sub>2</sub>, contributing to climate change
- ☐ Organics in landfills create acidic, toxic leachate, which can pollute groundwater

### **Composting helps fight climate change**

- ☐ Organics which decompose aerobically, as with composting, produce fewer greenhouse gases than landfills
- ☐ Compost is a nutrient rich soil amendment that can actually help pull carbon out of the atmosphere, making compost an incredible carbon sink!
- ☐ Our soils store three times more carbon than plants can store

### **Compost is known as gardener's "black gold"**

- ☐ Adds vital nutrients back into your soil, can breakdown clay
- ☐ Healthier soil = healthier plants and higher yields
- ☐ Suppresses plant diseases, weeds, and pests
- ☐ Improves water retention in soil and reduces erosion

### **Composting is the most efficient way to reduce food & yard waste**

- ☐ 37% of all waste in Broomfield is compostable.
- ☐ Natural way to recycle and extend the lifespan of landfills

### **Backyard composting saves money**

- ☐ Reduces need for chemical fertilizers and purchase of compost
- ☐ Water bills many drop
- ☐ Cheaper than bagging organic wastes & having them removed

## What is Composting?

A process where people create an optimal environment to help accelerate the natural breakdown of organic matter.

### **What is an optimal environment?**

- ☐ 50% Greens/50% Browns
- ☐ Needs air (oxygen)
- ☐ Moist as a wrung out sponge
- ☐ Bugs (decomposers) can access compost

**More info:** [Sustainablebroomfield.com](http://Sustainablebroomfield.com) (Compost Page), [crescentgrange.org](http://crescentgrange.org)

# Steps to Start Backyard Composting:

## Choose a bin

- ☐ Buy a bin: A bin that sits on the ground is ideal, but turning bins are easier to use.
- ☐ build a bin: Pallets are good materials for this
- ☐ use an open pile: If you have a yard with lots of space

## Choose a location

- ☐ Easy access, easy to reach or you won't use it, close to where material will be used
- ☐ Level space in shade or sun (may need to water more in sun)
- ☐ Close to a hose
- ☐ Ideally your compost will be in direct contact with the ground (no weedcloth, gravel, etc)
- ☐ Some distance from your normal hangouts, sometimes they can have a slight odor and some flying insects nearby.

## Collect materials

- ☐ Start collecting green and brown materials
  - ☐ Use a variety of greens, browns can be all leaves
  - ☐ Chop materials to be 1-2" in size

### Green Material

Fruit Scraps (cut up)  
Veggie Scraps (cut up)  
Tea Bags (no staples)  
Coffee Grounds & Filters  
Green Grass (untreated)  
Green Garden Waste  
Bread (no fatty spreads)  
Pasta (no heavy sauces)  
Waste from Herbivores  
Avocado pits (chopped)  
Melon rinds (cut up)  
Weeds, not gone to seed

### Brown Material

Dried Leaves  
Dried Grass (Untreated)  
Paper Towels & Napkins  
Egg Shells  
Brown Garden Waste  
Paper bags (torn up)  
Newspaper (1" strips)  
Straw (small pieces)  
Shredded Cardboard  
Shredded Egg Cartons  
Dried Animal Bedding  
Sawdust (untreated)

### Not allowed

Meat and Bones  
Dairy Products  
Grease, Fat, Oil  
Weeds Gone to Seed  
Bindweed & Sticks  
Compostable bags  
Compostable Plastics  
Waste from Carnivores  
Waste from Omnivores  
Produce Stickers  
Plastic Coated Paper  
Diseased plants

## Start your compost

- ☐ Layer 3 inches of green material with 3 inches of brown material. (or just equal volumes of green and brown material mixed together)
- ☐ Mix the layers together with a pitchfork
- ☐ Water the compost until it is wet as a wrung out sponge.
- ☐ Repeat layering, mixing, and watering weekly (or at least mixing and watering)
- ☐ Put a locking lid on your bin or cover pile with a tarp or carpet to reduce evaporation
- ☐ Add water as needed to keep it moist and turn to add oxygen at least once a week

## Use your compost

- ☐ Finished compost has a pleasant earth smell, if it still smells sour or like ammonia let it cook
- ☐ Add compost to gardens with vegetables or flowers, to your yard, around trees, & indoor plants