

Starting Your Backyard Compost System



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UCCE Master Gardener & UCCE Master Composter



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Agriculture and Natural Resources | Master Gardener Program

University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) Master Gardener Program of Santa Clara County

- University of California trained volunteers
- **Hotline:** Call, walk in, e-mail, **408-282-3105**
- Website: mastergardeners.org
- **Monthly e-mail with gardening tips & news**
- Demonstration & research gardens
- Events: Spring Garden Market, others
- Classes and talks, speakers bureau, school garden advisory team



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Master Composter Program of Santa Clara County

- Composting Education Program
- Training a trainer on an even year (2016; 2018)
- Monthly composting workshops at various locations
- City support on discounted bins, etc.
- School garden education
- **ROT-line, 408-918-4640**
- http://cesantaclara.ucanr.edu/Home_Composting_Education/



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Outline

- Basic Composting
- Choose a System
- Follow the Basics
- Getting Started Step by Step
- Tips & Tricks
- Critters
- Hot Pile vs. Cold Pile
- Compost Recipes



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Basic Composting

- Compost: a decayed mixture of plants (such as leaves and grass) that is used to improve the soil in a garden
- Composting is nature's way of recycling!



<http://bloggingbishop.com/taxonomy/term/283>



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Benefit of Compost

- Saves you money
- Save our plants
- Saves water
- Saves our world



http://sjmastergardeners.ucanr.edu/Composting_/

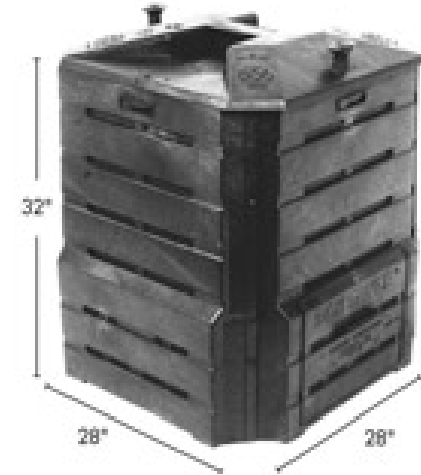


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Choose a System

- Food Waste & Yard Trimmings
 - Rodent-resistant bins
 - Open piles & Simple bins
- Food Waste Only
 - Worm bins



<http://www.sanjoseca.gov/index.aspx?NID=2191>



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Follow the Basics

1-2-3

1. Chop materials
2. Layering browns & greens (1:1)
3. Maintain water & air (50%)



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Getting Started Step by Step

1. Choose a location
2. Add materials (Brown-Green-Brown, always)*
3. Maintain water & air (50%)
4. Be patient!



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Tips & Tricks

- ‘Free’ greens from Starbucks, Jamba juice
- ‘Bank’ your browns in the fall
 - Collecting dry leaves
- Speed up by adding chicken manure
- Always bury kitchen scraps
- A few handful of native soils



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<http://bloggingbishop.com/taxonomy/term/283>

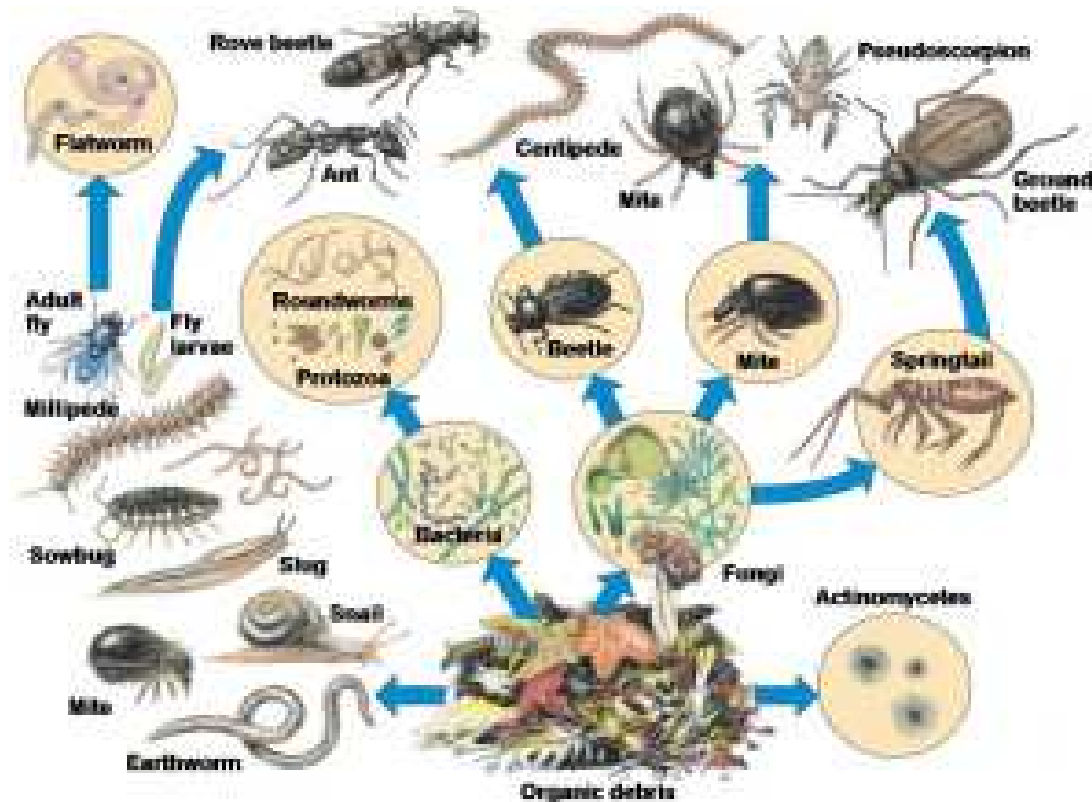
<http://www.suffolkschoolsrecycling.org.uk/Composting/Composting-at-School---How-to-do-it!>



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Critters in Compost Pile



<https://brandonscompostproject.wordpress.com/>



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Hot pile vs. Cold pile

- > 3x3x3'
- Thermophillic 104-170F
- Hot for a few days
- Killing pathogen and weed seeds
- Faster decomposition
- Commercial compost requirements
- Any size
- Mesophillic 40-110F
- See lots of worms
- Less turning of pile
- Slow decomposition
- Same finished compost



<http://www.rbnc.org/composting.htm>



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Compost Recipes

Brown + Green + Air + Water + Time
=
Finish Compost!



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Happy Composting 😊



<http://compostpilotprojectucsb.blogspot.com/>



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