

# COMPOST

*Organic matter decomposed to a state where it has become humus.*

**Organic matter:** the water remains or waste products of any living thing

**Humus:** A fragrant spongy nutrient rich material resulting from the decomposition of organic matter.

Compost recycles **all** organic matter on the planet, stabilizing nitrogen

## Benefits to the Soil

Increases water retention

Increases aeration

Nutrients released over time

Provides balanced nutrients

Improves soil structure

Balances pH

Adds micronutrients

## Full of beneficial microbes

**Compost is ALIVE, it a buffer and reacts with the life in the soil.**

Chemical fertilizer is designed to be directly released to the plant—a one-time shot

## Feed the soil to feed the plant

Four key elements to compost:

1. **Nitrogen (green leafy material)**
2. **Carbon (brown and woody material)**
3. **Moisture (from water)**
4. **Oxygen (from air)**

Aerobic Composting (with air)

Carbon (browns)/ Nitrogen (greens) balance (Ideally 25 to 1, by volume approx 1 to 1)

Water/Air balance

3'x3' minimum size for pile to heat up.

Primary decomposers (FBI)

Bacteria (heat up the pile); the pile gets hot because of microbial respiration (“party in the pile”).

Fungus (begin their work as the pile begins to cool down).

Insects/Invertebrates and worms (work in the completely cooled parts of the pile).

*When building a pile, use what you have.*

*The smaller the particles are when you begin, the faster they break down.*

*Keep your layers even and flat when building.*

*When the pile cools down, turn it.*

*Compost is “finished,” or stable, when it no longer heats up.*