

QUESTION	ANSWER
Will it smell unpleasantly?	Compost should not smell unpleasant, at least not to the extent that it bothers you. A strong, unpleasant compost smell usually indicates that something has not been done properly. Look at the table and check if there are any materials you should not have put in the compost.
Will it go on fire?	Compost temperatures must reach 150 to 200 degrees Celsius for the material to spontaneously combust, which is unlikely.
Does it attract pests?	We have to be careful about what materials we put in the compost pile and make sure to avoid those that could attract pests. Look at the table and check which materials should be put in the compost.
How long does composting take?	There are no hard and fast schedules for composting. The time to obtain finished compost depends on the ingredients we put in the compost and how much effort was put into maintaining optimal composting conditions. Compost production can take from 6 weeks to 2 years. To speed up the composting process, we can use Bokashi-effective microorganisms or California earthworms.
Do I need to buy a backyard composter?	Composters are not necessary, but they can be helpful. By using a composter that you can make yourself or buy at an agricultural pharmacy, the composting site looks neater, prevents access to animals, takes up less yard space, etc.
What is the best place for compost?	Compost piles can be placed in the sun or in the shade. They should be placed in a suitable, well-drained area, near a water source, away from tree roots.
Should I turn (mix) the compost? If yes, how often?	No, compost does not have to be turned, but turning speeds up the process. By occasionally turning the compost with a pitchfork, you will make it looser. In this way, more oxygen reaches the microbes, and the undegraded material is distributed in the center where composting takes place faster.

<p>Should I add water to the compost? If so, how much?</p>	<p>If you notice that the compost is dry, especially during the summer months, you can add water. Compost should be moderately moist — like a wrung-out sponge.</p>
<p>Is there anything I should do with the materials before I put them in the compost</p>	<p>Even if it is not necessary, chopping and shredding the material into smaller pieces can help a lot and speed up the composting process.</p>
<p>How do I know when the compost is ready to use?</p>	<p>Compost is ready to use when it looks dark and crumbly and smells earthy. Most of the material has been decomposed and is no longer recognizable, and the pile does not heat up when turned. The compost should sit for another 4 weeks after you estimate it to be ready.</p>
<p>Can compost be used instead of fertilizer?</p>	<p>Compost cannot be used as a direct substitute for fertilizer. However, it will reduce the need for fertilizer and is an excellent soil regenerator. Compost has many advantages. It improves drainage in clay soil and retains moisture in sandy soil. Compost helps the development of plants and in some cases also in suppressing plant diseases.</p>

SYMPTOM	POSSIBLE CAUSE	POSSIBLE SOLUTION/ALTERNATIVE
<p>The compost pile is dry</p>	<p>Lack of water</p>	<p>Turn the compost and add water. To retain moisture longer in dry periods of the year, you can cover the compost pile with a tarp or a cover if it is outdoors</p>
<p>The compost pile is moist and warm, but only in the middle.</p>	<p>The pile is too small</p>	<p>Collect more materials to make a larger pile and/or cover the top of</p>

		the pile.
The materials are not degraded. Leaves or grass clippings are visible.	Congestion, poor airflow	Mix the compost with a pitchfork or chop up larger pieces, then return to the pile. Avoid adding thick layers of leaves, grass clippings, hay, or paper unless they are first shredded.
There are large, undecomposed materials in the compost	Size and material composition	Remove the undecomposed materials, and shred them to reduce their size if possible.
The compost pile is not heated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the pile is moist and sweet-smelling, it may need more nitrogen</li> <li>• Not enough oxygen</li> <li>• Cold weather</li> <li>• Compost needs more microorganisms</li> <li>• The compost is ready for use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add fresh grass or other material with a high nitrogen content</li> <li>• Turn the pile to make it looser</li> <li>• Add more organic waste if possible and/or cover it with straw or a tarp.</li> <li>• Additional microbes usually are not needed if the pile has a good mix and is moist. Microbes are already on leaves, grass and weeds. However, the shovel of finished compost or 1/2 shovel full of garden soil can be added as a starter.</li> <li>• If your compost looks dark and crumbly, smells earthy, the primary input is unrecognizable, and the pile doesn't heat up when turned — then the compost is probably ready. Let it dry for a few more weeks, then use it for plants</li> </ul>
Compost has a strong smell, like ammonia.	Compost may contain too much nitrogen	Add high-carbon materials such as shredded leaves, untreated wood, sawdust, or shredded newspaper and turn the pile.

WHAT CAN AND CAN'T BE PUT INTO THE COMPOST:		
MATERIAL	YES/NO	COMMENT
Mowed grass	YES	Combine it with other materials to avoid creating larger clumps that are more difficult to break down.
Leftovers from fruits and vegetables	YES	We recommend that the peels be chopped as finely as possible to speed up the process of their decomposition.
Hair	YES	It has a high nitrogen content. Add water and put it in the pile.
Hay	YES	Put it in the heated compost if there are weed seeds.
Lime	NO	It is not necessary to add lime because the materials will decompose themselves to a neutral pH. Lime can cause an unpleasant odor, and it can also kill beneficial bacteria in the compost.
Fertilizer from domestic animals (herbivorous): horse, cow, sheep, pig, goat or poultry	YES, but	Use with care - great nitrogen resource.
Meat, fat, milk, tallow, cheese, etc.	NO	It is not recommended because it can attract animals, have an unpleasant smell, and slow down the composting process.
Newspapers	YES	We recommend cutting them into small pieces or strips. Avoid glossy pages as the inks may contain heavy metals.