

## Backyard Composting Tip Sheet

### ? Did You Know?

57% of the garbage going to landfill from Calgary homes could be composted<sup>1</sup>? 22% is yard waste and the other 35% is food waste. These materials contribute to methane gas and leachate pollution in the landfill. Compost these items at home and create a nutrient rich soil amendment (compost) to use in your yard and garden instead!

### ⚙️ Backyard Composting Bin Options:



Homemade Single Bin



Upright Bin



Tumbler

### > Where should I put my bin?

**Convenience:** Place your compost bin where you can easily access it in both summer and winter

**Sun:** the heat from the sun will contribute to the decomposition process – a sunnier spot will help you get compost faster!

**Water:** the compost pile tends to dry out in Calgary's heat so make sure a water source is nearby (rain water is best!)

### The Recipe:

Green Materials, Brown Materials  
Water and Oxygen

### > Directions:

1. **Layer Browns and Greens** – an equal proportion of carbon rich (Browns) and nitrogen rich (Greens) materials provide the bin with a “balanced diet”.
  2. **Add water** – when your compost bin gets dry, add water (rain water if possible). The material should be as moist as a wrung out sponge.
  3. **Add oxygen** – the micro-organisms and bacteria in the bin require oxygen so stir or aerate your bin 3-4 times per month (in spring, summer, and fall). Use a pitchfork, old hockey stick or a “wing-digger” aerating tool.
1. **What's in Calgary's garbage? (2014).** Retrieved October 24, 2014 from <http://www.calgary.ca/UEP/WRS/Pages/City-initiatives/Calgarys-Garbage.aspx>



Landfill leachate is liquid that moves through or drains from a dump or organized trash collection site. This runoff often includes toxins and harmful chemicals and if not properly managed, can contaminate the groundwater near the site and potentially impact the ecosystems of rivers, streams, and other waterways.



### Single-family waste



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### Take action! What can be added to your backyard composter?

#### > The Good Stuff

##### **Greens (nitrogen-rich)**

- Fruit and veggie scraps
- Banana peels and apple cores
- Corn cobs (chopped)
- Coffee grounds
- Tea bags
- Plant debris
- Weeds that have not gone to seed
- Tree fruit and evergreen needles
- Flowers

##### **Browns (carbon-rich)**

- Coffee filters
- Dried leaves or grass
- Dryer/vacuum lint
- Cat and dog hair
- Human hair
- Wood chips/shavings
- Straw
- Newspaper
- Wine corks (non-synthetic)
- Bird cage cleaning

#### > Moderation Only

- Algae
- Blood meal
- Bone meal
- Cotton rags
- Feathers
- Felt waste
- Granite dust
- Hay
- Hops
- Leather waste & dust
- Leaf mould
- Manure
- Muck
- Peat moss
- Rope (non-synthetic)
- Sawdust
- Seaweed
- Soil
- Straw
- String (non-synthetic)
- Wood ash
- Wool
- Rags (non-synthetic)

#### > Do Not Add to Your Backyard Composter

- Meat, bones, fish scraps: these materials attract dogs, cats, insects & rodents and take a long time to break down
- Oil, fatty material, dairy products: oils and greases take a long time to break down and they affect the breakdown of other materials too; they also attract insects
- Pet litter: may contain disease organisms harmful to humans
- Diseased plants: the heat of a home compost pile may not kill the diseased organisms or any insects or eggs infecting a plant
- Dishwater: most dishwashing soaps contain perfumes and greases
- Barbecue ashes/coals: highly resistant to decomposition and contain excessive amounts of sulphur



### Need to purchase a composter or some help to get started?

We have a free online guide, sell composters all year, and offer workshops in the spring & fall. Learn more online [www.greencalgary.org/green-homes](http://www.greencalgary.org/green-homes)

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100, 301-14th St NW Calgary, AB, T2N 2A1  
403-230 1443 ex 222 | [info@greencalgary.org](mailto:info@greencalgary.org)

 @greencalgary  find us on facebook