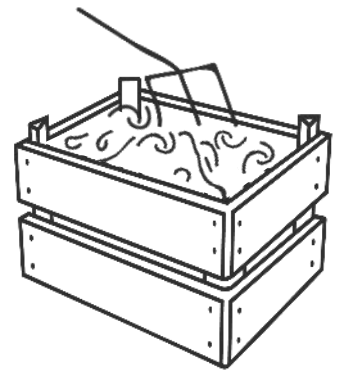# All About Compost

Composting is a method of decomposing organic solid waste. The process can be slow or fast, depending on what materials you use and the size of the materials you use, but the end result turns a waste problem into a garden solution.

Why Compost?

Using compost in a garden is beneficial in many ways: it enriches the soil, helps retain moisture, suppresses plant disease and pests, and reduces need for chemical fertilizers. It's also good for the environment! Composting also lowers your family's or school's carbon footprint by keeping waste out of the landfill. Composting creates ideal conditions for microbes to multiply, which means combining nitrogen, carbon, and carbon dioxide (air).

How Do I Get Started?

In a large bin, mix compostable materials. If you are using more than one bin, use one side to start composting. Add your waste. When composting, think of materials as either Brown = Carbon or Green = Nitrogen. Mix approximately half "browns" and half "greens," and, using a a pitchfork or shovel, turn your compost to help mix the two and incorporate air. Add your compost to soil to help plants grow!

Nitrogen "Greens"

Fruit & vegetable peels/waste

coffee grounds

egg shells

plants

grass (unfertilized)

Carbon "Browns"

cardboard

paper

woodchips

dried leaves & grasses

twigs

Don'ts

fried food

oil

greasy food

meat

H.O.P.E. Gardens
helping other people eat

All About Composting
Turning a Waste Problem into a Garden Solution!

Instead of throwing some of your waste away, you can use it to create plant food! Adding compost to your garden soil will help the plants grow faster and need less water.

Composting is putting materials that contain nitrogen, like fruit and vegetable peels, egg shells, coffee grounds, and grass, with materials that contain carbon, like cardboard, paper, plants, grasses, dead leaves, and twigs, together in a bin or a bucket and mixing them together with a big shovel or pitchfork. But you have to be careful—not all food scraps are good for creating compost. Never add fried or greasy foods, cooking oil, or meat.

Color in the items below. For the materials that can be composted, draw a line from them to the compost bin. Draw an "X" over the materials that you should not put in the compost bin.