

Composting Tools and Site Selection

There are many ways to create sustainable and nutritious compost for your garden using scraps from your kitchen and garden! These methods are all different but require similar tools and site requirements to create and maintain your composting system.

Basic tools for Composting Systems

- **Bucket:** Handy to store wastes in the home before transferring to pile, or move maturing compost to a different area.
- **Compost thermometer:** Optional, needed to determine the exact temperature.
- **Pitch fork:** Forks with round tines (four to six) works well to turn or move compost.
- **Gloves:** Protect your hands while handling compost.
- **Hoses:** Help to maintain compost moisture levels.
- **Pruners, loppers, or sharp spade:** Can be used as shredders for larger materials.
- **Screen:** A screen for sifting finished compost from decomposing materials. This can be made from 1/4" hardware cloth and a 2' x 3' x 4" wood frame.
- **Spade or shovel:** Useful for digging out final compost and chopping materials.
- **Wheelbarrow (or Garden Cart):** Essential to transport compost, yard wastes, etc.



A Composting Site Should be:

- **Within permitted areas:** Check local zoning ordinances for any setback requirements or specific backyard composting rules, i.e., no food wastes permitted, etc.
- **Near water source:** A large quantity of water is essential to maintain the compost pile (especially hot compost). Access to a hose or irrigation system is ideal.
- **Good drainage:** Keep the pile or bin on well drained, slightly-sloped soil, to avoid excess moisture.
- **Away from wood on buildings:** The heat, bacteria and fungi generated in the composting process may discolor or degrade wood siding if placed in contact with it.
- **Near the destination of the compost:** If possible, locate the pile or bin close to where you want to use the compost, to avoid transporting the heavy material long distances.
- **Out of wind and hot sun:** In the summer, keep the pile or bin shaded to avoid excess heat. In the fall, spring and winter, the sun's warmth will help extend the biological activity. Protect it from the wind, since it will dehydrate the pile in any season.
- **Out of sight:** Consider planting shrubs, tall grasses, etc. or installing attractive fencing or arbors to block the view, decrease wind damage, and block scavenging animals from your pile. Also, placing the bin or pile downwind from your neighbor to avoid spreading odor is a nice gesture.