

# It's Up To You!

## Fact

Adding composting to traditional recycling can reroute as much as 70 percent of waste to beneficial use rather than disposal.

## Tips

- The information in this brochure was found at the following websites:  
<http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/1000/1189.html>  
[www.epa.gov/epaoswer/non-hw/compost](http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/non-hw/compost)  
[www.ohiodnr.com/recycling](http://www.ohiodnr.com/recycling)  
[www.swaco.org](http://www.swaco.org)
- Learn how to compost food scraps and yard trimmings by consulting reference materials on composting, or check with local environmental services.
- Call the Franklin County extension service hotline at (614)462-6700 Ext. 222 for composting information. For all other counties look under county government and find OSU Extension Services.
- If you have a yard, allow mown grass clippings to decompose and return nutrients back to the soil.
- If there's no room for a compost pile, offer organic materials to community composting programs.
- Use decaying leaves as alternative mulch for gardens and flowerbeds.



**Division of Recycling  
& Litter Prevention**



# THE COLUMBUS ZOO & AQUARIUM



A NEW WIGGLE ON WASTE



# Composting

# The Recipes

## What Is It?

**Compost** is a nutrient rich humus; a mixture of various decaying organic substances, such as dead leaves, manure, etc. used for fertilizing the land. It is created by the natural decomposition of organic waste materials through the action of microorganisms

## Who Does It?

“Nature’s recyclers” are creatures such as lichens, mushrooms, sow bugs, beetles, and earthworms which are responsible for turning dead plants and animals into usable nutrients in the wild. **You can compost too!**

## Why Should You?

**Did you know that leaves, yard trimmings, and food waste make up 23 percent of the waste Americans send to the landfill?** Composting in your own backyard opens space in the landfills while improving your soil and encouraging healthy plants that clean the air. Composting can also reduce the use of chemical herbicides, pesticides and fertilizers that can lead to water pollution.

## Vermicomposting (Worm Bin Composting)

Redworms are kept in a shallow bin with ¼ inch drainage holes drilled in the bottom. Fill with shredded paper and other biodegradable bedding such as peat moss and sterilized soil. Next, feed them food waste such as vegetables, egg shells and coffee grounds. Do not feed them any meat or bones. The worms then digest the waste and excrete nutrient rich castings (feces) that fall to the bottom of the bin. After a few months this becomes rich soil to be used in gardening projects. To harvest, shift old bedding to one side and add new bedding and food scraps. The worms will move to the fresh bedding and the composted soil can be removed for use.

## Basic Composting

To compost outside, either build or buy a bin or simply make an open pile. Composting requires a mix of 25% green material such as fresh grass clippings, fruit and vegetable remains or manure and 75% brown material such as wood chips, dead leaves, dried grass or straw. Never compost meat or fish scraps, bones, dairy products or household pet waste. Always keep compost material moist, but not water-logged. Turn pile weekly to let air in. This speeds decomposition.