

## Facts about Composting

**Alive:** Compost is a living thing. The microbes, fungi, bacteria and worms all help to break the material down to usable products for the plants. Don't put in things that will damage these microbes.

**Diversity:** Compost is like a cake, you need different ingredients to make it work well. You can compost anything that was alive once. In a cake some things are needed in large amounts others in smaller. As a guide use 5 times the amount (volume) of carbon to nitrogen rich material (list of examples below).

Carbon (Browns) 5 of these items below	Nitrogen (Greens) To 1 of these items
Dry leaves Straw Dry grass and pruning's Sticks Dry mulch Newspaper, shredded paper, junk mail Cotton undies!	Manure Food scraps (closed bin) Coffee grounds Green grass clippings Hair, skin, feathers Weeds

**Air:** Compost gets a bad smell when there is insufficient air and anaerobic bacteria can thrive. Add sticks, twigs and material that will keep the air in. Look at a compost turner or fork to turn it over ever couple of weeks if necessary.

**Moisture:** Like all good cakes compost needs water but not too much, Put rinsing water in the bucket of scraps and add to the compost. Compost is ready when it looks like loose soil.

If you follow the steps of **ADAM** you will produce good compost.

## To improve compost

Add a sprinkle of rock dust over compost near the top to add vital minerals. This can be purchased from most garden centers.

When ready mix good handfuls of "clumping kitty litter" in the compost. It's clay and helps to hold in water.

Only put food scraps in a closed bin system. In an open pile it attracts flies and vermin.

For more information visit our website: [www.mrc.wa.gov.au](http://www.mrc.wa.gov.au)

Email : [wasteed@mrc.wa.gov.au](mailto:wasteed@mrc.wa.gov.au)

Contact: 9306 6303



## Trouble Shooting

**“Smelly”** Too much moisture “nitrogen” products – put in more leaves, sticks and straw – mix to add air.

**“Too dry – won’t breakdown”** – add water. Always place compost bin close to water supply.

**“Cockroaches everywhere”** – always bury a compost bin at least 20cm into the ground to stop mice, cockroaches etc. Never put food scraps on an ‘open’ compost pile.

**“Taking ages to breakdown”** – check water, add a bit more “nitrogen” (manure, coffee, food scraps, green grass, and fresh weeds).

**“Maggots!”** – probably coming from meat or dairy. Cover them with dirt and leave compost unopened for 2 weeks. They will die and become compost!

**“When is it ready?”** – when it looks like loose soil and is not hot.



For more information visit our website: [www.mrc.wa.gov.au](http://www.mrc.wa.gov.au)

Email : [wasteed@mrc.wa.gov.au](mailto:wasteed@mrc.wa.gov.au)

Contact: 9306 6303

