

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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BACKYARD COMPOSTING FUNDAMENTALS

Have you ever wanted to start a compost pile in your backyard, but were not sure where to get started? Keep reading for helpful tips and suggestions for creating a successful compost pile to put your food scraps and yard trimmings to produce a nutrient-rich soil amendment. There is no need to buy special tools or compost bins - all you need is space in your yard, preferably away from your home, and a pitchfork. Bins that are barrel-shaped and are turned by hand can also be used to speed up the decomposition process.

First, start by laying down sticks and branches to help bring air in from the bottom of the pile, then start layering brown materials like dead leaves and wood chips. Next, add a layer of green material like your food scraps and coffee grounds. Continue layering all the material you have and finish with a layer of brown material to keep any smells from escaping, and to keep flies and bugs from getting in the top. Make sure to add water to your compost pile to keep it from drying out, thereby allowing the microbes and invertebrates to have a happy place to live. Turning the pile more frequently will lead to a quicker composting process. When the material in the pile has shrunk by half or more, you can start harvesting the compost. Using a sifting screen is a good way to prevent the larger pieces from getting into your finished compost. Those large pieces can then be tossed back in the pile to finish decomposing. The finished compost should be black and have very little recognizable material left in it. Keep the compost spread out on a tarp to let any bugs that got through the sifting screen to return to the pile - and then you are ready to use your compost!

Compost can be used in many different ways in your garden, from placing in the hole before you put your vegetable plants to applying to the top of an existing garden, or even mixed in water to use as a fertilizer. Using compost will help you reduce the need for store-bought amendments and fertilizers and will also help retain moisture in the soil. Composting our food scraps and yard trimmings also have benefits to our environment.

When food scraps and yard trimmings end up in landfills, they produce methane gas, which is a much more potent greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide. Fortunately, there are things we can do to prevent food and yard waste from going into the landfill. Composting is one way; another is through a process called anaerobic digestion which is able to capture the methane and use it to run generators or vehicles. California is taking steps to reduce food and other organic waste from being sent to landfills with the passage of Senate Bill 1383 Short-Lived Climate Pollutants: Organic Waste Reductions. This legislation will be effective on January 1, 2022 and has the goals of reducing organic waste sent to landfills and to also recover 20 percent of currently disposed edible food by 2025. Help us in achieving these statewide goals and start your compost pile today.

For more information on organic waste collection in your area please, contact the Tehama County Solid Waste Management Agency at (530) 528-1103, email us at tehamacountyrecycles@co.tehama.ca.us, or visit our website www.TehamaCountyLandfill.com.