

Item of Interest

Quick and Easy Compost within 14 Days

Making compost within 14 days seems to be an impossibility, but by following the following 7 steps the impossibility becomes a reality.

1. These are the basics for the quick-compost method. Select level, well-drained ground for the site of your compost pile. Locate it in full sun; the extra heat will speed along the composting process.

If you are in a windy area, protect the pile from excessive heat loss by locating it behind a windbreak such as a hedge or fence.

2. Build bins, using anything that is handy---lumber, chicken wire or hardware cloth, bricks or concrete blocks, hay bales or railroad ties. You may opt to just build piles, and cover them with tarps weighted against the wind.

Make sure your bin has enough openings to allow air to penetrate the pile so that the bacteria and fungi that do the composting can get enough oxygen.

Build at least two bins --- one holds the pile that is composting now, the other holds finished compost for use. That way, one pile or bin is always at work.

3. Assemble organic materials.

Divide them into two categories: green and wet (high in nitrogen); and dry and coarse (high in carbon).

4. Chop organic materials into smaller than 6 inches; decomposition works best on small pieces. Chop your materials, put them through a shredder or run the lawn mower over them before composting them.
5. Mix courser materials in with the finer ones. For ultimate microbial activity, try to include plenty of high-nitrogen materials. Lay down a 4-inch bottom layer of rough cornstalks or brush. Follow with a sprinkling of green or wet material like manure or grass clippings, then a layer of garden soil, then more rough stuff like hay or straw, more clippings and so on.

Sprinkle dry materials with water as you build the pile. Cover the contents with a roof or tarp to keep the rain from soaking the pile and slowing the composting process.

6. Keep it up. As you build the pile, make sure it is at least 3 feet square and 3 feet high ----the minimum measurements needed to sustain the required biological reactions. If the pile is too large --- over 5 feet high --- the mass packs down, squeezing out air and slowing down decomposition. A well-constructed pile will heat up to at least 130 degrees Fahrenheit (internal temperature) within three or four days.
7. Turn the compost every three days and you may have usable compost in as little as 12 days time. Fluff and aerate it as you toss it back into the bin, placing the outside of the existing pile on the inside of the pile you are creating. Add water until the material glistens. Make sure each particle has spent some time in the interior of the pile.

The pile will hit peak temperatures during the first few days, then cool down, heating up again with each turning. It is fully composted when it does not heat up after being turned. If you wish, move the compost out of the bin then and let it age for a week or two before using it in the garden.

Banana Peel Fertilizer for Tomatoes

Began saving banana peels in a bag in the freezer about mid-February.

When it is time to plant tomatoes, dig a trench two inches deeper than required to plant the tomatoes, lay the peels end to end and cover them with dirt. Then plant the tomatoes as usual. The vines often reach 8 to 10 feet tall, and the fruits are deliciously sweet.

Increase the yield of your Tomatoes

Try using Epsom Salts to increase the yield of your tomatoes ----it also helps produce bigger fruits. Mix two tablespoons of Epsom Salt in one gallon of water and apply one pint of the solution to each plant when blooming begins.

Grammy's Plant Food Recipe

- 1 tablespoon of baking powder
- 1 tablespoon of Epsom Salt
- 1 tablespoon of Salt Peter
- 1 tablespoon of ammonia
- 1 gallon of water
- (Feed every two months)