COMPOST TROUBLESHOOTING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SYMPTOMS</th>
<th>PROBLEMS</th>
<th>SOLUTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pile not composting</td>
<td>Too dry</td>
<td>Add water until damp as a wrung-out sponge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pile smells rotten and/or attracts flies</td>
<td>Too much dry, woody material (lack of Nitrogen)</td>
<td>Turn, add fresh green materials or organic nitrogen fertilizer (manure)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-compostables present</td>
<td>Turn to get more oxygen in pile, add dry or woody materials</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pile smells like ammonia (sharp odor)</td>
<td>Food washes in open bin, holes larger than 1/4 inch</td>
<td>Turn compost and rodent-proof your bin by making sure there are no holes larger than 1/4 inch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-compostables present</td>
<td>Food washes in open bin, holes larger than 1/4 inch</td>
<td>Turn compost and rodent-proof your bin by making sure there are no holes larger than 1/4 inch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low pile temperature</td>
<td>Pile is too small (less than 3x3x3)</td>
<td>Collect more materials and mix the new with the old, cover top, insulate sides</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

COMPOSTING RESOURCES

Contact your county’s cooperative extension service for more tips on composting and additional resources.

Visit one of the statewide home composting demonstration sites where various composting methods are displayed and additional information is available. Contact the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) at the address below for site locations, training, and starting a local home composting program. A list of videos, books and manufacturers is also available.

Georgia Department of Community Affairs
Home Composting Program
60 Executive Park South
Atlanta, GA 30329
(404) 679-4940
www.dca.state.ga.us
Visit the clean water campaign website at www.CleanWaterCampaign.com

COMPOSTING AT HOME IN GEORGIA

Turning Garbage Into Gold
Prepared by
Georgia Department of Community Affairs
Home Composting Program
and Provided in Partnership with the Clean Water Campaign.

Why Compost?

Composting is an easy way to transform your landscape trimmings and your fruit and vegetable kitchen scraps into a dark, crumbly, sweet-smelling soil amendment. Gardeners refer to composting as “turning your garbage into gold” because it saves landfill space, conserves natural resources, and improves soil quality.

In Georgia, yard trimmings have been banned from landfills since 1996. Organic waste such as yard trimmings and kitchen scraps represents about 36% of our waste stream. Recycling organic waste is a natural way to reduce the amount of wastes going to landfills and it conserves natural resources. Composting is Recycling it:

- **Saves you money** by lowering garbage bills and replacing the need for commercial soil amendments.
- **Helps your garden and container plants by** improving the fertility and health of your soil.
- **Saves water** by helping the soil hold moisture and reducing water runoff.
- **Benefits the environment by** recycling valuable organic resources and reducing the use of fuel to transport yard trimmings off-site and process them on a large scale.

What Can You Compost?

**DO COMPOST**
Grass Clippings
Leaves
Shrub Prunings (chopped)
Flowers
Weeds
Sawdust
Hair
Fruit and vegetable scraps
Coffee grounds/tea bags
Small amounts of uncoated paper

**DO NOT COMPOST**
Meat
Bones
Dairy Products
Fish
Greasy Foods
Dog and cat feces
Unchopped, woody wastes
Diseased plants
Coated paper

By spreading 2 to 3 inches of compost over the soil around plants, trees, shrubs and exposed slopes, gardeners and landscapers suppress weeds, keep plant roots cool and moist, conserve water, maintain a loose and porous surface, and prevent soil erosion.

**HOW TO USE COMPOST**

Compost is ready to use when compost materials are reduced to a dark, rich humus. If some larger pieces are not decomposed, you can sift those out and use them to start a new batch. Compost can be added to the soil at any time to help keep plants healthy. It improves soil structure, holds moisture, provides plant nutrients, and introduces beneficial organisms into the soil.

Here are the most common ways to use compost:

**SOIL AMENDING**

A potting mix can be made by mixing one part soil and one part compost. Be sure compost is fully decomposed (black and crumbly) before using it.

**MULCHING**

Contact your county’s cooperative extension service for more tips on composting and additional resources.

Visit one of the statewide home composting demonstration sites where various composting methods are displayed and additional information is available. Contact the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) at the address below for site locations, training, and starting a local home composting program. A list of videos, books and manufacturers is also available.

Georgia Department of Community Affairs
Home Composting Program
60 Executive Park South
Atlanta, GA 30329
(404) 679-4940
www.dca.state.ga.us
Visit the clean water campaign website at www.CleanWaterCampaign.com

**WHAT CAN YOU COMPOST?**

**DO COMPOST**
Grass Clippings
Leaves
Shrub Prunings (chopped)
Flowers
Weeds
Sawdust
Hair
Fruit and vegetable scraps
Coffee grounds/tea bags
Small amounts of uncoated paper

**DO NOT COMPOST**
Meat
Bones
Dairy Products
Fish
Greasy Foods
Dog and cat feces
Unchopped, woody wastes
Diseased plants
Coated paper

**SYMPTOMS**

- Pile not composting
- Pile smells rotten and/or attracts flies
- Rodents in pile
- Low pile temperature

**PROBLEMS**

- Too dry
- Too much dry, woody material (lack of Nitrogen)
- Pile is too wet, or compacted
- Non-compostables present
- Food washes in open bin, holes larger than 1/4 inch
- Non-compostables present
- Pile is too small (less than 3x3x3)

**SOLUTIONS**

- Add water until damp as a wrung-out sponge
- Turn, add fresh green materials or organic nitrogen fertilizer (manure)
- Turn, add dry materials
- Remove meat, grease, etc. and turn
- Turn compost and rodent-proof your bin by making sure there are no holes larger than 1/4 inch
- Remove meat, grease, etc. and turn
- Collect more materials and mix the new with the old, cover top, insulate sides