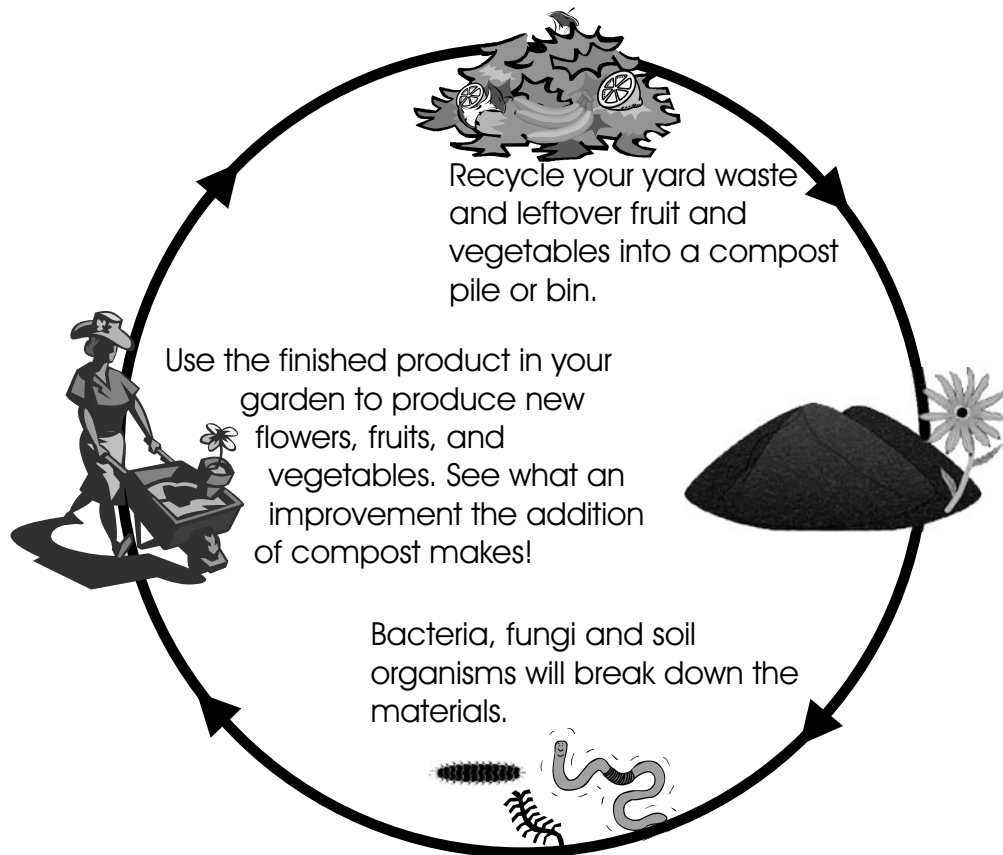


# Backyard Composting

Help the environment while creating a wonderful, natural fertilizer to help your garden reach its full potential.



For more information on composting call the Leon County Extension Office at 850-487-3004 or visit their website at <http://leon.ifas.ufl.edu>.

## Composting for Beginners

**Composting is another form of recycling.** For more information on composting, call the Leon County Extension office at 850-487-3004 or visit their website at <http://leon.ifas.ufl.edu>.

**Location** - Your pile can be built anywhere except up against a structure such as a house or fence. Locate your pile at least 2 feet from any structure.

**Bins** - Bins are unnecessary, you can build your pile on the ground. However, bins are useful for keeping your pile looking neat, retaining heat and moisture, avoiding the negative effects of wind and weather, and a bin can help deter pests.

### What to Compost ✓

- Leaves • Grass • Fruit and vegetable scraps
- Coffee grounds/filters and tea bags • Other yard waste such as chopped twigs, branches, straw hay and saw dust.

### What not to Compost ⚡

- Meat scraps/bones • Dairy products • Cooking oils or fats
- Pet wastes • Disease or insect infested plants or weeds with seeds.

**Building the Pile** - You can throw in organic materials as they become available. This will result in a very slow decomposition process, but is fine if you are not in a hurry for the finished compost.

For a faster process, use the following steps:

- Wet the ground under the pile.
- Put twigs or other un-shredded brown materials (for example, dead leaves) on the bottom of the pile to provide some aeration at the base.
- Layer the rest of your materials, alternating green layer (for example, freshly mowed grass, kitchen waste) and brown layers. Add water as you go.
- End with a brown layer.

**Monitor the Pile** - Optional step. Check to see that your pile becomes hot within a few days. Also monitor the pile for moisture. When you pick up a handful of material, it should feel like a wrung-out sponge.

**Turn the Pile** - Also an optional step. Turning the pile means stirring it up by some method. Turn the pile to decrease composting time. Once a week to once a month is fine.