



Sweet BombDiggity Farms' Simple Guide to Composting: Turn Waste into Garden Gold

At Sweet BombDiggity Farms, we believe that healthy soil is the foundation of everything we grow. Whether you're a seasoned gardener or just starting your sustainability journey, composting is one of the most rewarding practices you can adopt. This guide will walk you through everything you need to know to transform your kitchen scraps and yard waste into nutrient-rich "black gold" that will make your plants thrive. Let's dig in and discover how easy and beneficial composting can be for your garden, your wallet, and our planet!

Why Compost? The Power of Turning Scraps into Soil

Composting is nature's way of recycling, and it's one of the most powerful tools we have for creating healthy, productive gardens. When you compost, you're harnessing the incredible power of decomposition to transform ordinary kitchen scraps and yard waste into nutrient-dense soil amendment that plants absolutely love. This rich, dark material improves soil structure, increases water retention, and provides essential nutrients that help your vegetables, flowers, and herbs reach their full potential.

Beyond the garden benefits, composting makes a significant environmental impact. In the United States alone, food scraps and yard waste make up approximately 24% of what ends up in landfills, yet only about 4% of this material is actually composted. When organic matter breaks down in landfills without oxygen, it produces methane—a greenhouse gas far more potent than carbon dioxide. By composting at home, you're actively reducing landfill waste and fighting climate change.



Nutrient-Rich Soil

Compost provides essential nutrients that boost plant health, vigor, and yields naturally

Reduces Waste

Diverts 24% of landfill material back into productive use for gardens

Moisture Retention

Improves soil's ability to hold water, reducing irrigation needs significantly

Climate Action

Captures carbon in soil and prevents methane emissions from landfills

Do's: Easy Habits for Successful Composting

Success with composting comes down to developing a few simple habits that keep your pile healthy, active, and odor-free. At Sweet BombDiggity Farms, we've learned that consistency matters more than perfection. The beauty of composting is that nature does most of the work—you just need to create the right conditions and maintain them over time. These practices will help you establish a thriving compost system that produces amazing results with minimal effort.

1

Collect Kitchen Scraps

Gather fruit and vegetable peels, coffee grounds, tea bags, and eggshells in a countertop container. Empty it into your compost bin every few days to keep your kitchen fresh and your pile fed with nitrogen-rich "green" materials.

2

Add Brown Materials

Balance your greens with carbon-rich "browns" like dry leaves, shredded paper, cardboard, and straw. This balance is crucial—aim for roughly 3 parts brown to 1 part green by volume to maintain proper decomposition.

3

Turn Regularly

Mix or turn your compost pile every 1-2 weeks using a pitchfork or compost aerator. This adds oxygen that beneficial microbes need to break down materials quickly and prevents anaerobic conditions that cause bad smells.

4

Monitor Moisture

Keep your compost as moist as a wrung-out sponge—damp but not dripping. Too dry and decomposition slows down; too wet and you'll create anaerobic conditions. Water lightly during dry spells and add browns if it's too soggy.

Don'ts: What to Avoid Putting in Your Compost

While composting is forgiving and nature-driven, certain materials can cause serious problems in your pile. Understanding what *not* to compost is just as important as knowing what to include. These problem materials can attract unwanted pests, create foul odors, introduce diseases to your garden, or simply take far too long to break down. At Sweet BombDiggity Farms, we've learned these lessons through experience, and we want to help you avoid the same mistakes we made when starting out.

Meat, Dairy & Oils

These materials attract rats, raccoons, and other pests while creating terrible odors as they decompose. They also break down slowly and can become rancid, making your compost pile unpleasant to work with.

Pet Waste


Dog and cat waste can contain harmful pathogens and parasites that survive the composting process and could contaminate food crops. Stick to composting plant-based materials and herbivore manures only.

Diseased Plants

Plant material infected with diseases or weeds that have gone to seed can spread problems throughout your garden when you use the finished compost. These materials need higher heat to kill pathogens than home piles typically achieve.

Treated Wood

Chemically treated wood products contain toxic preservatives that can leach into your compost and ultimately your garden soil, potentially harming beneficial organisms and even your plants.

 **Pro Tip:** If you're unsure whether something should go in your compost, ask yourself: "Is this natural, untreated plant material or food?" If the answer is no, it's safer to skip it. When in doubt, leave it out!

Keep It Simple: 3 Easy Steps to Start Composting at Home

Ready to begin your composting journey? You don't need fancy equipment or a science degree—just follow these three straightforward steps and you'll be on your way to creating your own "black gold." At Sweet BombDiggity Farms, we believe that the best compost system is one you'll actually use consistently. Start simple, learn as you go, and don't worry about getting everything perfect from day one. Nature is incredibly forgiving, and even a basic compost pile will eventually transform your scraps into beautiful, nutrient-rich soil amendment.



What Goes In? The Best Ingredients for Sweet BombDiggity Compost

Think of your compost pile as a recipe where balance is everything. The best compost comes from combining a diverse mix of materials that provide different nutrients and decompose at different rates. At Sweet BombDiggity Farms, we've found that variety truly is the spice of life—and compost! The more diverse your inputs, the richer and more balanced your finished product will be. Here's your shopping list for compost success, divided into "greens" that provide nitrogen and moisture, and "browns" that provide carbon and structure.

Greens: Nitrogen Power

- Vegetable and fruit scraps (peels, cores, rinds)
- Coffee grounds and paper filters
- Tea bags and loose tea leaves
- Fresh grass clippings (in thin layers)
- Fresh plant trimmings and weeds (no seeds)
- Crushed eggshells for calcium boost

Greens are typically moist and decompose quickly, heating up your pile and providing the nitrogen that microbes need to thrive. They're the "activators" that get decomposition moving.

Browns: Carbon Structure

- Dry leaves and small twigs
- Shredded newspaper and office paper
- Cardboard (torn into small pieces)
- Straw and hay
- Wood chips and sawdust (untreated)
- Paper egg cartons and paper towel tubes

Browns are typically dry and decompose slowly, providing structure that creates air pockets in your pile. They're the "foundation" that keeps everything balanced and prevents odors.

📌 **Sweet BombDiggity Secret:** Coffee grounds are nitrogen goldmines! They not only add essential nutrients but also help beneficial soil microbes thrive. We collect grounds from local coffee shops to supercharge our compost piles.

What Not to Compost: Protect Your Pile and Your Garden

Creating successful compost means knowing your boundaries. While it might be tempting to toss everything organic into your bin, certain materials will cause more problems than they're worth. At Sweet BombDiggity Farms, we learned some of these lessons the hard way—dealing with pest invasions, terrible smells, and contaminated batches that we couldn't use on our garden. Save yourself the headaches by avoiding these problematic materials from the start. Your future self (and your neighbors!) will thank you.



Meat, Bones & Dairy

All animal products including meat scraps, bones, fish, cheese, milk, and butter attract rodents and other pests. They create extremely unpleasant odors as they rot and take much longer to break down than plant materials.



Diseased Plants

Plant material showing signs of disease, fungal infections, or heavy pest damage should be kept out of your compost. Home compost piles rarely reach temperatures high enough to kill all pathogens, so you risk spreading problems throughout your garden.



Pet Waste

Dog and cat feces can contain harmful parasites and bacteria that survive composting and pose health risks, especially if you're growing food crops. Manure from herbivores like chickens, horses, and rabbits is fine, but carnivore waste is not.



Large Woody Branches

While small twigs are fine, large branches and thick woody stems take years to decompose in a home compost pile. If you want to compost them, run them through a chipper first to break them into smaller pieces.

Troubleshooting Tips: Keep Your Compost Healthy and Happy

Even with the best intentions, composting doesn't always go perfectly smoothly. Don't worry—most problems have simple solutions! At Sweet BombDiggity Farms, we've encountered every compost issue imaginable, and we've learned that almost any problem can be fixed with a few adjustments. The key is learning to "read" your compost pile and understand what it's telling you. Here are the most common issues and exactly how to fix them so your pile stays productive and pleasant.



Problem: Stinky, Smelly Pile

Cause: Too many greens, not enough air, or too much moisture creating anaerobic conditions

Solution: Add generous amounts of browns (dry leaves, shredded paper, cardboard), turn the pile thoroughly to incorporate oxygen, and create air pockets throughout



Problem: Slow Decomposition

Cause: Pieces too large, insufficient turning, wrong green-to-brown ratio, or lack of moisture

Solution: Chop materials into smaller pieces (2-4 inches), turn more frequently (weekly), adjust your green-to-brown ratio, and ensure adequate moisture



Problem: Dry, Dusty Pile

Cause: Insufficient moisture preventing microbial activity and decomposition

Solution: Water the pile gradually while turning it, aiming for that "wrung-out sponge" consistency—damp throughout but not soggy or dripping



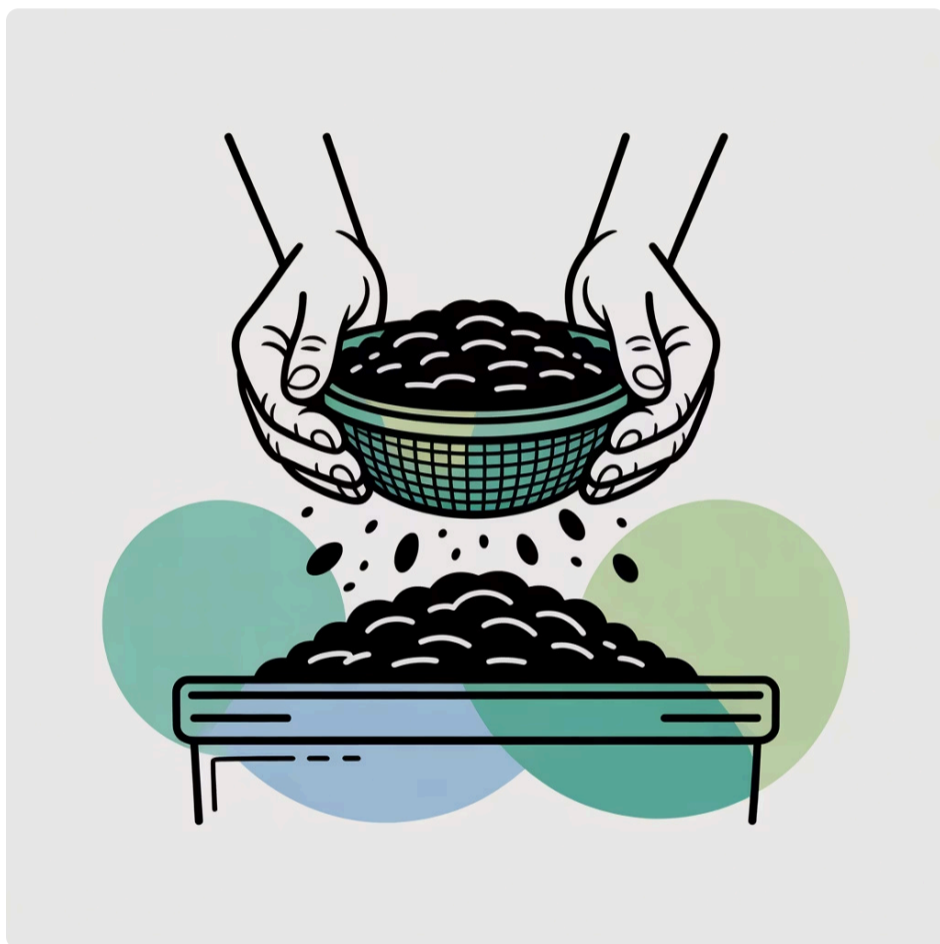
Problem: Pest Invasion

Cause: Food scraps exposed on surface, meat/dairy in pile, or inadequate bin security

Solution: Always bury food scraps under 6-8 inches of browns, remove any meat or dairy immediately, use a secure bin with a lid, and consider adding hardware cloth underneath

Harvesting and Using Your Compost: Black Gold for Your Garden

The moment you've been waiting for—harvest time! After 3-6 months of composting (or longer in colder climates), your patience will be rewarded with beautiful, finished compost. But how do you know when it's ready? Finished compost looks dark brown to black, has a crumbly texture similar to rich soil, and smells earthy and pleasant—like a forest floor after rain. You shouldn't be able to identify individual pieces of food or plant material anymore, except for a few tough items like avocado pits or woody stems that you can simply toss back into your active pile.



How to Use Your Finished Compost

- **Garden Bed Amendment:** Mix 2-4 inches of compost into your vegetable and flower beds before planting
- **Potting Mix Booster:** Blend compost with regular potting soil (25-30% compost) for container plants
- **Top Dressing:** Spread a 1-inch layer around established plants as a slow-release fertilizer
- **Mulch Alternative:** Use 2-3 inches around trees and shrubs to suppress weeds and retain moisture
- **Lawn Top Dressing:** Sift fine compost over your lawn in spring to improve soil health
- **Compost Tea:** Steep finished compost in water to create a nutrient-rich liquid fertilizer

3x

Better Water Retention

Compost-amended soil holds three times more water than unamended soil

5%

Organic Matter Increase

Regular compost use can increase soil organic matter by 5% or more annually

100%

Chemical-Free

Completely natural, with zero synthetic fertilizers or harmful chemicals

At Sweet BombDiggity Farms, we've seen firsthand how compost transforms our soil structure, improves fertility, and dramatically increases water retention—especially important during hot, dry summers. Plants grown in compost-enriched soil develop stronger root systems, show better disease resistance, and produce more abundant harvests. This isn't just fertilizer; it's a complete soil ecosystem in a bag, teeming with beneficial microorganisms that work symbiotically with your plants. Whether you're growing vegetables, flowers, or maintaining a lawn, compost is the foundation of long-term soil health and garden success.

Composting Containers & Resources

The right composting setup can make all the difference in your experience. At Sweet BombDiggity Farms, we use a combination of systems depending on our needs. Our primary setup is a three-compartment bin system that allows us to rotate compost through stages—fresh materials start in the first bin, then get moved to the second bin for active composting, and finally to the third bin for curing and finishing. This continuous system means we always have compost at different stages of readiness, ensuring a steady supply for our farm.

Popular Composting Container Options

Tumbling Bins

Easy to turn, contained system, faster composting, great for small spaces

Three-Bin System

Perfect for continuous composting, allows material rotation, ideal for larger operations

Electric Composters

Indoor convenience, odor-free, rapid processing, perfect for urban dwellers

Wire Mesh Bins

Inexpensive, good airflow, easy DIY option, works for any size pile

Our Favorite Tool: Mill Food Composter

We absolutely *adore* our Mill Food Composter for handling kitchen scraps efficiently! This innovative electric composter sits right on our kitchen counter and processes food waste quickly without any odor. It's a game-changer for busy farm life, allowing us to compost indoors year-round regardless of weather. The Mill system grinds and dries food scraps into nutrient-rich grounds that can be added directly to your outdoor compost or even shipped back to Mill for processing.

[Check Out Mill Composters](#)

Mill's website also features an excellent blog section packed with composting tips, sustainability resources, and creative ways to reduce food waste. It's become one of our go-to references for composting innovation!

Additional Learning Resources

Mill Blog & Resources

Comprehensive articles on food waste reduction, composting science, and sustainable living practices. Their blog covers everything from beginner basics to advanced techniques.

[Visit Mill's Website](#)

University Extension Programs


Many state university extension services offer free composting guides, workshops, and troubleshooting help specific to your climate and region. Search for "[Your State] Extension Composting."

EPA Composting Resources

The Environmental Protection Agency provides science-based composting information, including detailed guides for home and community composting programs.

Local Composting Communities

Join local gardening groups, community composting programs, or online forums to connect with other composters, share tips, and troubleshoot challenges together.

 **Follow Sweet BombDiggity Farms on Social Media!** We regularly share composting tips, farm updates, and sustainable living inspiration. Join our community of passionate composters and growers as we work together to build healthier soil and a healthier planet! 🌱🌟