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Let's talk Compost ……

Garden compost is just decayed, organic matter. It is an excellent way to use waste kitchen and garden materials, and the end product is a great soil improver helping retain nutrients, water and improve structure.

The composting process itself creates a habitat for different munching and crunching creatures, attracted by their required temperature as the heat rises and falls.

How does it work? Conditions for successful composting must be favourable for the organisms acting as decomposers. Such organisms need air, a moist environment, and an appropriate balance of nutrients, especially nitrogen and carbon.

To get a good mix it is helpful to distinguish between 'green' (leafy/succulent) and 'brown' (fibrous/woody) materials, which should be mixed in equal volume. Too many browns and the heap stays dry, too many greens mean the air is squeezed out and the good organisms die.

Greens (providing nitrogen)

- Grass cuttings
- Kitchen fruit and vegetable waste
- Coffee grounds and tea leaves
- Young leaves or nettles
- Annual weeds

Browns (providing carbon)

- Cardboard
- Dead flowers
- Shredded paper
- Autumn leaves
- Twigs
- Shredded woody prunings
- Straw





A good compost pile is well layered. Interspersing green and brown layers throughout.

Composting tips

- Compost bins can be small or large, to suit your space and amount of waste.
- Choose a sheltered, shady spot for your compost bin, ideally directly on the soil.
- 25-50% should be soft leafy green material.
- The other 50-75% should be chopped-up woody, brown material.
- Turning or mixing the compost adds air, which is necessary for the composting process. This should be done several times a year.
- Garden compost can take between six months and two years to reach maturity. Larger quantities of material tend to compost more efficiently, but smaller bins, while slower, should still produce good results.
- Composting tends to be faster in warm weather and slows down over winter.
- Mature compost is dark brown, with a crumbly, soil-like texture and should smell like damp woodland.
- It's unlikely that all the material will turn out like this, but any uncomposted bits can be added back into the next batch of composting material.

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If you are unable to compost you can put your garden waste into your green bin and the council will take it away, but you need to buy a permit for this to happen.
Buy your permit in March/April for the following 12 months. If you buy it in September for example it will only last until the end of March.