

Hot Composting

Fast, high-temperature compost in weeks, not months

DIFFICULTY Moderate

TYPE Ongoing system

TIME 3–8 weeks to finished compost



DIFFICULTY
Moderate



TIME
3–8 weeks



COST
Low



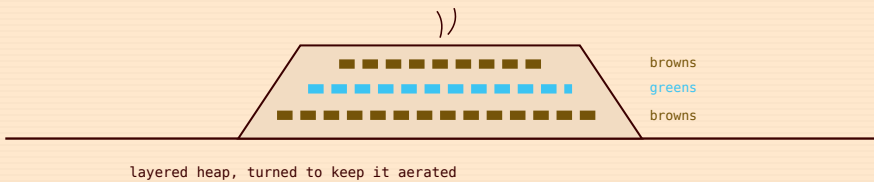
BEST SEASON
Year-round



FREQUENCY
Turned every few days

01 Layer browns and greens

A hot compost pile relies on a good ratio of carbon-rich 'browns' (straw, dry leaves, cardboard) to nitrogen-rich 'greens' (kitchen scraps, fresh grass), built as a large enough mass to heat up.



02 What you'll need

- A bay or bin at least 1m³
- A mix of browns (straw, dry leaves, shredded cardboard)
- A mix of greens (kitchen scraps, fresh grass clippings, manure)
- A garden fork for turning
- A compost thermometer (optional but useful)

04 Troubleshooting

- **Pile won't heat up** — usually too dry, too small, or too carbon-heavy; add moisture and greens, and ensure enough volume.
- **Bad smell (ammonia or rotten)** — too wet or too nitrogen-heavy; add more dry browns and turn more often.
- **Pests attracted** — avoid meat, dairy, and oily scraps; bury fresh additions into the centre of the pile.
- **Slow to break down** — pieces too large; chop or shred material smaller before adding.

06 Tips & variations

PAIRS WELL WITH

[Worm Farming \(Vermicomposting\)](#)

[Building Healthy Soil](#)

COMMON MISTAKES

[Building the pile too small to heat up](#)

[Letting it dry out during hot weather](#)

PRO TIP

Chop or shred material before adding — smaller pieces break down dramatically faster than whole stalks or branches.

03 Method

1. Build the pile at least 1m³ in one go, layering browns and greens roughly 2:1 or 3:1 by volume.
2. Water each layer lightly as you build — the pile should be moist as a wrung-out sponge, not wet.
3. Turn every 2–4 days to keep oxygen levels up and heat even.
4. Monitor temperature — a good hot pile reaches 55–65°C in the first week or two.
5. Once the pile stops reheating after turning, let it cure for 1–2 weeks before use.

05 Timing & maintenance

BEST TIME	Can be started any time of year, though warm weather speeds the process.
DURATION	3–8 weeks to finished compost with regular turning, versus months for a cold pile.
MAINTENANCE	Turn every 2–4 days during the hot phase; monitor moisture throughout.
SIGNS OF SUCCESS	Dark, crumbly, earthy-smelling compost with no recognisable original material, and no further reheating after turning.