

Skill Level: BEGINNER These how-to's are suitable for people who are new to DIY and who have a basic knowledge of tools. If you've painted a room or re-potted a plant, you can probably complete one of these projects by yourself in a few hours or less.

✓ MATERIALS

- Compost Bin Material Options:
 - Wire Fencing
 - Wood for Bins
 - Plastic Bins
- Household Collection Container(s)
- Compositing Materials
- Pitchfork or Shovel
- Gloves

Composting helps your yard—and the environment—by recycling common household scraps and yard waste. You don't have to be an avid gardener to enjoy the benefits of compost. In fact, you can work rich composting materials into your home's landscaping beds every spring to give annuals and perennials a quick and natural boost of fertilization. Compost is also the perfect ingredient for vegetable gardens—giving plants essential nutrients. And, with a few basic tips from Lowe's, you'll find it's easy to do.

PREPARATION

01 Select an area for your compost pile or bin. Look for a spot that gets a lot of sunlight and has nearby access to water.

- Make sure the location is close to the house for convenience, but not so close that decaying organics can be smelled inside.



02 Build or purchase compost bins.

- A small fenced area with no bottom allows worms and other beneficial organisms from the earth to work and aerate the compost.
- Bins, with or without a bottom, can be made with wood to contain the compost. For building plans, visit [Lowe'sCreativeIdeas.com/CompostBin](https://www.lowes.com/creativelideas/compostbin).
- Ready-to-use compost bins can be purchased and quickly put to work. They keep the pile contained and looking neat, while protecting the compost from weather and animals.
- **TIP:** Consider setting up two compost areas: one that is being added to and one that is ready for use as fertilizer.



03 Start your compost pile by lining the bottom of the fenced area or bin with straw or other dry organic material.

COMPOSTING

Efficient decomposition requires nitrogen (kitchen scraps), carbon (yard waste), oxygen (air), and water.

01 Collect kitchen and household scraps for the compost pile.

- Useful items include:

Fruit and vegetable scraps
Coffee grounds and tea leaves
Eggshells (rinsed of whites and yolks)
Shredded newspaper (not magazines)
Fireplace ashes
Sawdust

- Do not compost meat, bones, fat, grease, dairy products, or pet waste.
- TIP:** For more efficient composting, cut large scraps into smaller pieces.
- TIP:** Use a carbon-charcoal filter container to collect household scraps. The filter eliminates odors.



02 When the collection container is nearly full, empty the scraps to the compost bin or pile.

03 Add a layer of leaves, grass clippings, and/or weeds from your yard. If not available, add straw.



04 Moisten and mix the compost pile every few weeks. Water the pile, then use a pitchfork or shovel to turn the compost so that oxygen reaches all ingredients to encourage decomposition.

- TIP:** To make sure there is sufficient moisture, examine a clump of the material. It should be damp, but not soggy and drippy.



05 Adjust the proportion of compost ingredients by odor. The compost should have a good earthy smell.

- If the compost has an ammonia odor, add more carbon materials such as leaves and newspaper.
- If the compost smells foul, it is probably too wet and needs more dry materials such as leaves or straw.

06 Allow the compost materials to decompose before use. It should feel crumbly, look dark, and smell earthy. The process typically takes a few months, depending on ingredients.

- Do not use compost before it's ready—the decomposing ingredients can attract pests.



USING COMPOST

- 01 Use compost as potting soil for plants, mulch around flower beds, base soil for vegetable gardens, or as topsoil or amendment when planting a new tree.
- 02 Save unused compost in an airtight container for spring or fall. Alternatively, premix it with soil for ready-use.



With a little work and patience, composting pays off in amazing ways—saving you money and time, and giving you a beautiful landscape and garden in return. If you're looking for more economical and earth-friendly home improvement projects check out our lineup of videos at [Lowe.com/Videos](https://www.lowes.com/Videos).

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