



Composting is the decomposition of plant remains and other once-living materials to make an earthy, dark, crumbly substance that is excellent for adding to houseplants or enriching garden soil. It is the way to recycle your yard and kitchen wastes, and is a critical step in reducing the volume of garbage needlessly sent to landfills for disposal. It's easy to learn how to compost. [For more easy tips click here.](#)

Why not throw it away?

In 2002 the state of Ohio banned yard waste from landfills. This happened for several reasons.

- Yard waste is easy to recycle into mulch and compost
- Yard waste decomposes at a rapid rate. That was a problem for landfills because rapid decomposition creates methane gas
- Solid Waste districts were assigned the task of reducing the amount of trash their residents were throwing away
- As a result: Richland County Solid Waste opened a compost Facility to help residents of Richland County to recycle their yard waste

What is Yard Waste?

Yard waste is anything growing in your yard. Trees, grass, bushes and plants are all considered yard waste.

There are a tremendous number of options for containing your compost. Some people choose to go bin less, simply building a compost pile in a convenient spot on the ground. Others build bins from materials such as recycled pallets, or two-by-fours and plywood. And, of course, there are many commercial bins on the market.

Composting is not a new idea. In the natural world, composting is what happens as leaves pile up on the forest floor and begin to decay. Eventually, the rotting leaves are returned to the soil, where living roots can finish the recycling process by reclaiming the nutrients from the

decomposed leaves. Composting may be at the root of agriculture as well. Some scientists have speculated that as early peoples dumped food wastes in piles near their camps, the wastes rotted and were terrific habitat for the seeds of any food plants that sprouted there. Perhaps people began to recognize that dump heaps were good places for food crops to grow, and began to put seeds there intentionally.

Today, the use of composting to turn organic wastes into a valuable resource is expanding rapidly in the United States and in other countries, as landfill space becomes scarce and expensive, and as people become more aware of the impacts they have on the environment. In ten years, composting will probably be as commonplace as recycling aluminum cans is today, both in the backyard and on an industrial scale. Many states in the USA have stated goals or legislative mandates to drastically reduce the volume of waste being sent to landfills. Utilizing yard and kitchen wastes (which make up about 30% of the waste stream in the USA is a big part of the plan to minimize waste overall.

You can contribute to the 'composting revolution' by composting your own yard and kitchen wastes at home. If you have a large yard, you might prefer the ease of composting in a three-bin system out by the back fence. Richland County Solid Waste Management Authority promotes composting through home composting education efforts and the collection of yard wastes for large-scale composting. Whatever your style of composting, there's plenty of room to get involved!