



**Compost** is a dark, crumbly, earthy-smelling mixture of decaying organic matter, such as leaves and food scraps.

In this sense of the word, “organic” means “from a living thing.” Composting is a way to recycle organic materials and keep them out of the trash. Compost is often mixed into soil so nutrients from organic matter can be used

again. Compost adds nutrients for growing plants, improves soil’s structure, and helps it retain moisture. Compost can also be used as mulch around plants and trees.



## Composting, step by step:

- 1** – Collect organic matter and combine it in a composter or compost pile.
- 2** – Allow time for organic matter to break down and become compost (6 to 12 months).
- 3** – Use compost in the garden, around the yard and for potted house plants.



Capital District Community Gardens media



### For more information:

[www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/294.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/294.html) DEC's Recycling and Composting  
[www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/43349.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/43349.html) Keep America Beautiful's Recycle-Bowl  
[www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8802.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8802.html) DEC's New York Recycles  
[www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8801.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8801.html) DEC's Waste Reduction and Recycling Pamphlets  
[www.nyc.gov/html/nycwasteless/html/home/home.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/nycwasteless/html/home/home.shtml) NYC Recycles  
[www.epa.gov/osw/education/](http://www.epa.gov/osw/education/) USEPA's educational materials and games about waste  
<http://compost.css.cornell.edu/schools.html> Cornell Waste Management Institute's "Composting in Schools" webpage  
*Composting: An Easy Household Guide* by Nicky Scott, Chelsea Green Publishing Company, White River Junction, VT, 2007  
*Reduce, Reuse, Recycle: An Easy Household Guide* by Nicky Scott, Chelsea Green Publishing Company, White River Junction, VT, 2007  
*Where Does the Garbage Go?* by Paul Showers, Harper Collins (revised edition), 1994  
*Worms Eat My Garbage: How to Set Up and Maintain a Worm Composting System*, 2nd Edition by Mary Appelhof, Flower Press, 2003