

Composting Quick Reference

C:N 20:1 to 40:1 - (2 parts carbon 1-part nitrogen by volume)

Moisture 40% to 60%

Particle size: < 2" (< 5 cm) – A diverse sizes mix is good

Compost Sources

(Greens) Nitrogen Rich	Estimated C:N Ratio	(Browns) Carbon Rich	Estimated C:N Ratio
Fruit and Vegetable Scraps	10-20:1	Dry leaves, plant stalks, Dry grass clippings	30-80:1
Fresh Grass clippings	15-25:1	Shredded paper, cardboard	150-200:1
Coffee Grounds, Tea	20:1	Wood chips	200-500:1
Fruit Waste	35:1	Straw	48-80:1

Online Calculators:

<https://puyallup.wsu.edu/soils/compost-mix-calculator/>

[Compost Mixture Calculation Spreadsheets \(cornell.edu\)](#)

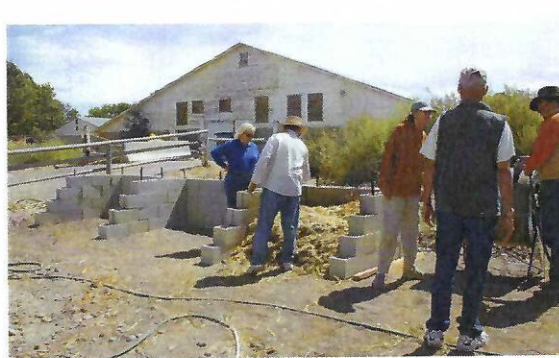
Continued Readings:

<https://www.uidaho.edu/extension/publications/publication-detail?id=cis1066>

<https://www.epa.gov/recycle/composting-home#ingred>

<https://extension.psu.edu/home-composting-a-guide-for-home-gardeners>

<https://extension.umn.edu/managing-soil-and-nutrients/composting-home-gardens>



Compost Troubleshooting

Problem	Pile Characteristics	Fix
Odor	Not enough air, too many fine particles	Turn, Add coarse materials, i.e., wood chips, straw
Odor	Too much wet material, moisture	Turn, add dry materials, evaluate water source
Odor	Too much nitrogen	Turn, Add carbonous coarse materials, i.e., add woody materials
Not Heating	Compost volume is too small	Add more carbon and nitrogen materials. Increase pile size
Not Heating or composting	Not enough Nitrogen	Add more nitrogen rich material
Not Heating or composting	Lack of oxygen	Turn, Add coarse material
Not Heating or composting	Too wet	Turn, if pile doesn't dry out add more coarse material
Not Heating or composting	Too Dry	Turn while adding water to reach ~60% moisture
Too Hot	Pile is too large	Reduce size of compost pile
Too Hot	High N and Carbon materials too large	Reduce size of compost pile and balance C:N Ratio
Too Hot	Pile is on Fire	Stop, separate pile and roll to small flat piles (don't add water)/ Call 911
Scavengers and Wildlife	Animals digging in pile	Do not add meat scraps, dairy oils, or use closed system