



Composting Guidelines

The following information should be viewed only as a guideline for composting. Every installation will vary due to differing materials utilized in the composting process.

- Ideal moisture level is @ 45-65%
- Composting temperature = 120-160° F (the closer to 160° F the better/faster)
 - Avian Influenza is killed within 8 minutes after reaching 131° F according to the Virginia DEQ
 - Research has shown that most pathogens are killed after maintaining a minimum temperature of 131° F for a period of three consecutive days, however, temperatures over 160° F will start to kill off some of the microbial activity that is desirable for soil enhancement
- Oxygen level = 5-16%
- Carbon to Nitrogen ratio should be between 25/1 and 40/1
 - Note; the carbon needs to be “available” carbon, small chunks of wood do not qualify as available in a composting recipe, but are desirable to help with aeration of the pile
- Bulking material / Carbon source options;
 - Wood chips
 - Sawdust/shavings
 - Grass clippings
 - Leaves
 - Paper products (cardboard)
 - Hay/straw
 - Corn fodder
 - Horse manure
 - Poultry/Broiler manure
 - Pen pack with high level of bedding material
- Some heat loss will occur when the drum is rotated, however, rotation is necessary to introduce oxygen in order to speed up the composting process. Differing recipes will require differing rotation intervals.

Informational websites:

<http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/conserva/rrr/composting/index.htm>

http://compost.css.cornell.edu/Composting_homepage.html

<http://cwmi.css.cornell.edu/compostfs5.pdf>

<http://cwmi.css.cornell.edu/>

<http://www.composting.org/>

<http://www.extension.org/article/28585>