

COMPOSTING MADE EASY

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I like most of the other gardeners did not compost my leaves, grass, vegetables, produce, coffee grounds or other green plants growing including some weeds without seeds (such as dandelions). I would bag most of my leaves, grass and send it to a land fill or a firm that composted the material and then I would buy back some of the finished product.

Three years ago we had a compost speaker at our garden club and I got my mind changed by what she said. Also, at the same time we had a new flower guy arrive at the golf course where I work and he was telling me what compost will do for my garden.

We will start with the flower guy; he uses all the leaves from the golf course that used to be thrown away. The leaves are piled on the course in different places and after the leaves are mostly down they will use their commercial mowers and run over and grind the leaves and old grass clippings (without fungicide) into small pieces then put all in a pile and they sit there for the winter. They then use a backhoe and turn the pile once a month and by June the compost is ready for use on all the flower beds.

The speaker we had explained how she did her compost and how easy it was to do the job. How much less fertilizer she used and she started to make sense. I grew up on a farm and I did not use any farming methods on my garden. But I have changed and I think it is for the best, I now compost.

The first year the golf course gardener let me have some of his leaf mulch and I used it on 20 roses and on part of my vegetable garden and I sure received a rude awakening. The roses and the garden I put the compost on were much better than the ones I used just fertilizer!

How I make my compost; I do not use my mower to grind the leaves like I used to because I was grinding my leaves and I was told I hit some real wet leaves and they were tough and they bent my mower shaft and the cost of replacing that was too much. Since that time I bought a small grinder called the WORX grinder and I now use it to grind my leaves, green spent flowers and other small twigs from my yard. (I use all the leaves from my trees and even get some from the neighbors). The grinder I use will not grind branches or large woody stems. So I put the woody branches in a pile and once a year I rent a little larger grinder and that takes care of the problem. Just remember that things grown in the garden except rose canes and leaves can be composted. (The reason not to use roses in your compost is that if you have any rose related Fungus it will not be completely killed). We also use all the fruits, vegetables and coffee grounds we produce. We purchased a ceramic container with a lid and it has a filter to help hold down the smell. We cut up the peels and anything put in the container into small pieces. We empty the container once a week or whenever it gets full. I mix the product into the compost pile every time I add things to it(do not just leave on top). An old coffee can or large container can also be used as a vessel for collecting fruits and vegetables.

During the winter I have noticed the compost will not heat up but as soon as spring gets here the new pile will heat up and in about two months the pile is ready to use.

Points to remember:

Do not use old rose canes

Do not put weeds with seeds in pile

Grass without weed killer can be used

All leaves can be used (best if shredded)

Wood stems from trees can be used (after grinding)

Spent flowers are great for the pile of compost (need Shredded)

Just remember that to make a good compost pile, to add a layer of brown material (leaves) then try to add a layer of green. This will start the composting faster. The last thing to remember is to turn the pile at least once a month, try going to the bottom and keep the pile mixed. The last thing I add to my compost piles is aged horse manure. Cow manure aged will also work. I put in about a bushel of the aged manure to each pile. The last thing I add to the pile is a product called Compost Maker that I purchased from a local garden store.