



# Composting Basics

# Overview

- Who are we?
- What happens in a landfill?
- Benefits of composting
- Composting options
- Compost essentials
- Rodents
- Weeds
- Using compost



# Compost Education Centre

## Mission:

To encourage composting, local food production and conservation through education throughout the CRD

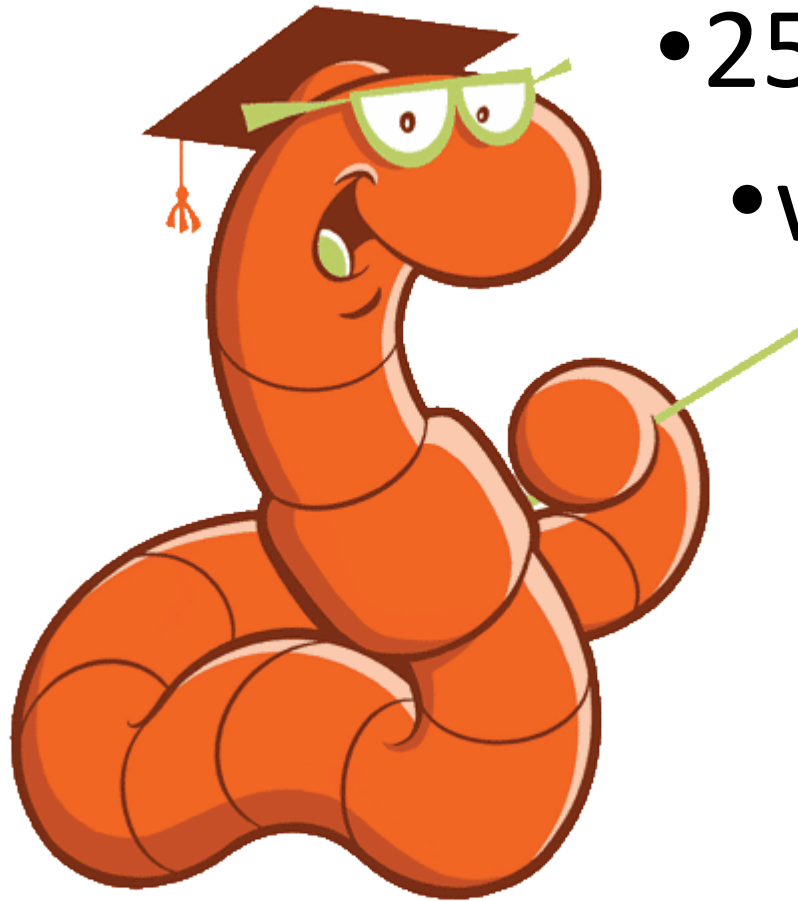


# Our Mandate

- 1) Provide public education programs to the residents of Greater Victoria in the areas of composting, organic gardening and conservation.
- 2) Establish a demonstration site to provide the public with an opportunity to observe and experience the various elements of composting, organic gardening and conservation.
- 3) Provide a telephone hotline to answer general inquiries about composting, organic gardening and conservation.
- 4) Actively solicit membership in the society.
- 5) Utilize volunteers in all aspects of the society's activities

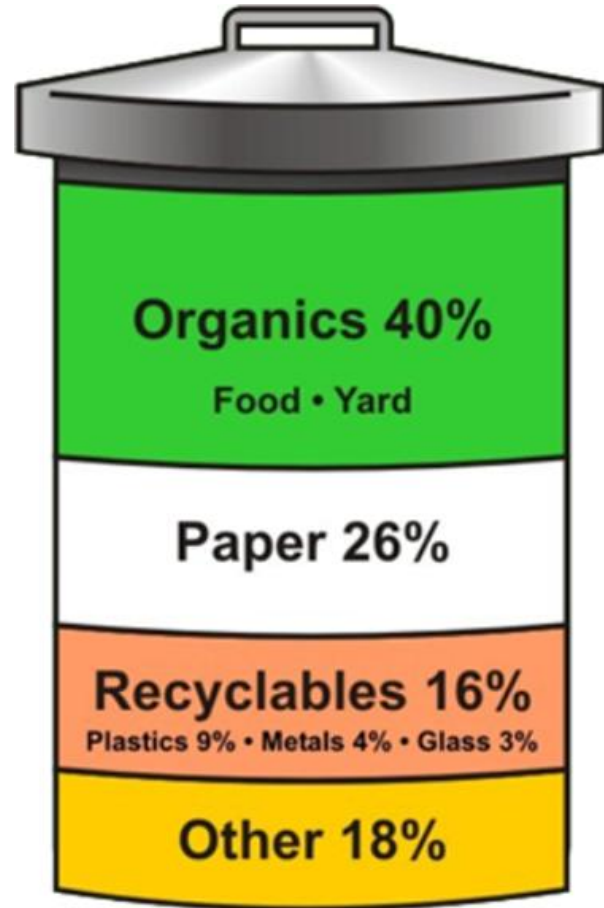


# Hotline!



- 250-386-WORM (9676)
- [www.compost.bc.ca](http://www.compost.bc.ca)

# What goes into the landfill?



Current Waste Analysis of Landfill Material in Canada  
(credit: The Compost Council of Canada 2012)

# What Happens in a Landfill?



# Composting Defined

*Kitchen scraps:* organic waste from your kitchen ... the raw material for compost

*Composting:* The decomposition of organic materials through biochemical processes

*Compost:* A humus-y, nutrient rich, soil-like material which is the result of the biochemical decomposition of organic matter

# Benefits of Composting

## Ecological

- Microbes fight pathogens and pests, release nutrients to plants
- Slow release nutrients
- Improves soil texture
- Adjusts pH
- Binds toxins



## Social

- Extends life of landfill
- Connects you to your waste
- Saves money
- Pro-active solution!

# Compost Essentials: Your recipe for success!





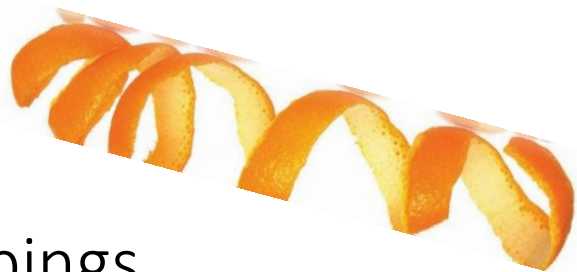
# Basic Recipe

1 part “greens” – nitrogen rich materials

1 part “browns” – carbon rich materials

## Greens

- Fruit & vegetable scraps
- Garden clippings
- Coffee grounds & tea bags
- Manures
- Okara
- Eggshells
- Grass clippings



## Browns

- Straw
- Newspaper
- Cardboard
- Dried leaves
- Sawdust

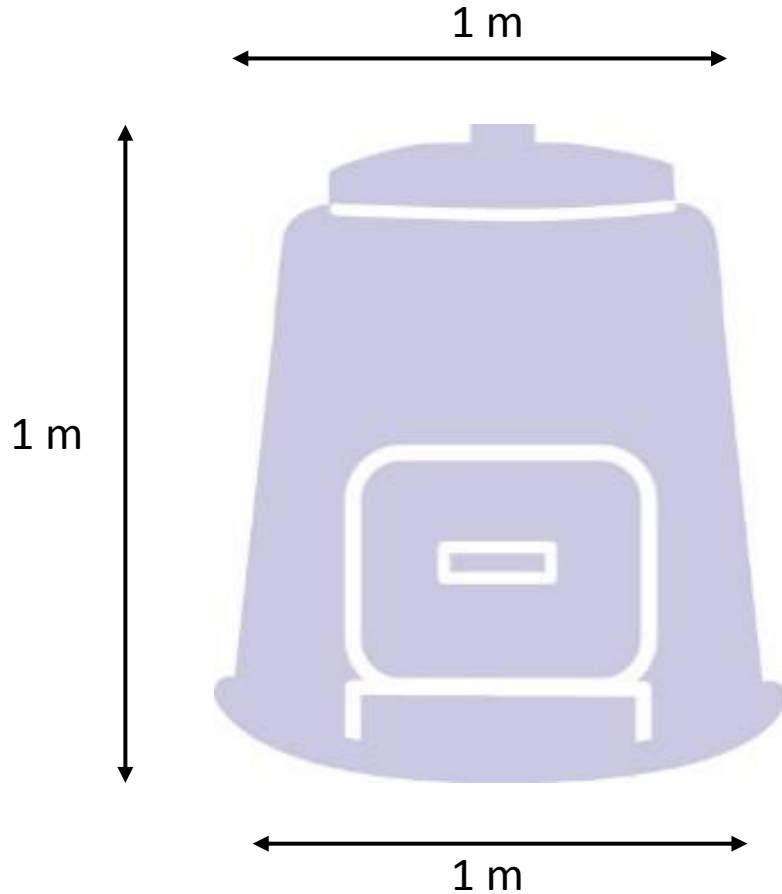


# Surface Area



Smaller pieces = faster decomposition

# Volume



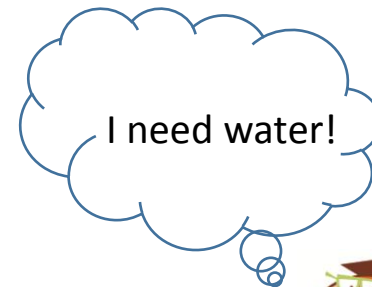
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-need enough materials that they can react to each other and begin the decomposition process

# Moisture



Your compost pile should feel like a wrung out sponge



# Air



- Aeration
- Thin layers
- Airflow from bottom and top

# Diversity of Materials

Diversity of  
materials

=

Diversity of  
nutrients

=

Diversity of  
bacteria



# Options



- Earth Machine
- Green Cone Digester
- Vermicomposting
- Tumbler
- Pick-up services



# Basic Backyard Composting i.e. Earth Machine

- “Passive” or “cold” composting
- Low maintenance
- Layer greens and browns as materials are available
- Doesn’t necessarily need sun
- Harvest finished product from bottom
- 6 months - 2 years



# Tumbler Composters

- Should only take raw fruits and veggies to avoid issues with pathogens
- Can be easier to aerate
- Can be efficient
- Expensive
- Can be hard to turn





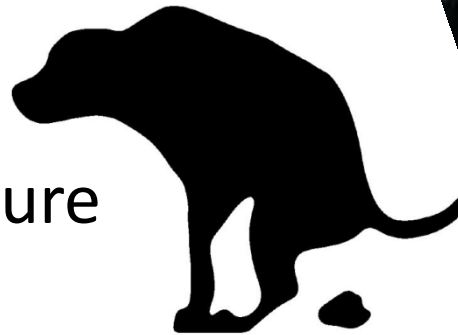
# Vermicomposting



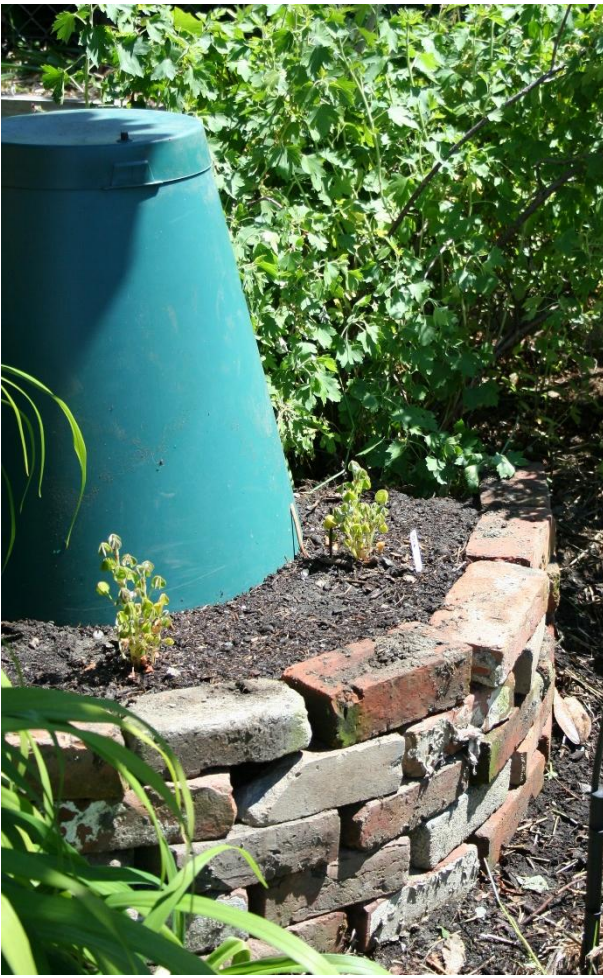
- Great indoor option
- Takes same materials as backyard compost
- Fast compost cycle
- Slightly higher maintenance due to harvest

# No-no's!

- Meat
- Fish
- Bones
- Dairy
- Oil
- Breads, grains
- Diseased plants
- Noxious weeds
- Meat-eating animal manure



# Green Cone Digester

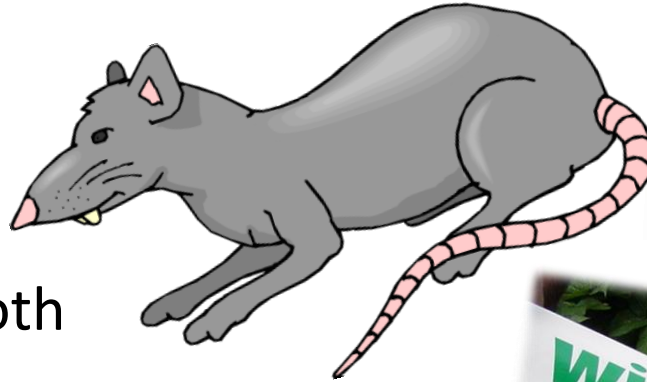


- No-no's = YES!
- No browns
- Nutrient rich leachate
- Need a sunny, well-drained location



# Rodent Resistance

- Location, location, location
- Browns on top
- Locking lid, base plate
- 1/4 inch landscape cloth
- Keeping out the no-no's
- Aeration



# Managing Weeds

- Weed before seed!
- Solarizing/ tarp/garbage bag method
- Last resorts for noxious weeds



# Using Compost



- Top-dressing perennials
- Transplanting/sowing seeds
- Potting mix
- Compost tea
- Inoculant



# Compost Pick-Up Services

