



## Don't Trash It- Compost It!

### At A Glance:

Have you ever thought about composting food scraps or lawn trimmings but not sure where to begin? Composting is not only beneficial to the earth, but also to your trash can by reducing the amount of waste you put out each week. Composting takes a small amount of upfront work to get started but can produce nutrient rich soil for your lawn or garden.

### You Will Learn:

- 1) How to start a compost bin
- 2) What to add to a compost bin
- 3) How composting is beneficial to the earth and your garden

### Instructions:

1. Watch our educational video on backyard composting:
  - a. Watch Video:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1VHx5POf3H0>
2. Start your own compost pile in your backyard.
3. Wait for the organic material to break down- this may take months.
4. Share with us on social media your success!



### Feedback:

We'd love to hear your feedback! Please take our short, one-minute survey by [clicking here](#).

### Learn More:

Explore more about backyard composting from the local experts, [Rodale Institute](#), based out of Kutztown, PA, or check out the [Penn State Extension](#).

# Don't Trash It- Compost It! (continued)

## To Think About:

1. How does preventing compostable material from entering the waste stream benefit the earth?
2. How can you implement backyard composting, even with a small yard or patio?

## Background:

### What is compost?

Compost, at it's basic level, is decomposed organic matter. Composting occurs every day in soil, but when you create a compost pile you speed up the natural processes. Microbial organisms (mainly bacteria and fungi) exist in the soil, leaves, and food scraps. Finished compost works to transform "dead" materials into nutrients that enrich your garden. Made from organic wastes like kitchen scraps, paper, and yard clippings, compost is an effective way to recycle while creating a valuable byproduct that feeds plants for healthy growth.

### Why Compost?

- It enriches soil, helping retain moisture and suppress plant diseases and pests.
- It reduces the need for chemical fertilizers.
- Gardeners often call compost "black gold" because it's so rich in nutrients.

According to the EPA, about 24% of the United States' waste is organic material that could be composted. Americans throw away an average of 1.3 pounds of food scraps daily. These scraps are rich with nutrients that are beneficial to the soil. When food is not composted, it enters the waste stream and those nutrients are lost.

