

# Milton Public Health's Guide to Urban Composting



## What is Composting?

Composting is managing nature's natural recycling system of decomposition. Naturally occurring soil organisms convert organic material into humus.

## What are the benefits of Composting?

Composting is an inexpensive and convenient way of handling organic waste and helping the environment. It also reduces the amount of garbage that needs

disposal and saves money for you and your community in reduced soil and disposal costs. Composting also produces valuable soil supplements to improve soil structure.

## What Should You Compost?

Yard Waste such as leaves, glass clippings and weeds.

Food Waste such as fruit & vegetable scraps, coffee grounds, tea bags, and egg shells.

## What Shouldn't You Compost?

To keep animals and rodents out of your compost, avoid these items in your compost pile: meat, bones, fatty food wastes, dog and cat litter, and diseased plants.

## Appropriate Composting Bins for Milton, MA

### New Age Composter



The New Age Composter (shown) and Earth Machine Composter are rodent-resistant bins distributed through DEP's recycling grant program.



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

For more information about composting, please contact the Milton Health Department at 617-898-4886

## How to Make a Compost Pile:

**#1 Purchase a Compost Bin:** In order for the bin to be rodent resistant, it must have a secure cover and floor and openings no wider than one-half inch.

*Milton offers a reduced price on rodent-resistant compost bins. You can call the office of the Treasurers at (617) 898-4853 and request additional information.*

**#2 Set Up the Bin:** The bin should be set up in a shady, convenient area with good drainage.

**#3 Start the Pile:** The first layer should be made of coarse material (corn stalk). Then you should add alternating layers of brown and green materials. You should sprinkle a layer of soil every 12 inches. Food scraps should go into the center of the pile.

**#4 Add Water:** Add enough water to make sure the materials are damp. They must be damp or they will not decompose.



## Maintaining a Compost Pile:

Keep oxygen available to the pile by fluffing the pile with a hoe or using a compost turning tool each time you add material. The more you turn your compost the less time the composting cycle will take. At least once during the spring and fall you should do a complete turn of your compost pile, meaning the top becomes the bottom.

## Tips for Composting:

—If you don't have "brown" and "green" materials handy at the same time, build your pile with browns and mix in greens when they are available.

—Save bags of leaves to add in the spring or summer when "browns" are scarce. Shred your leaves or run them over with a lawnmower to shorten the composting time.

