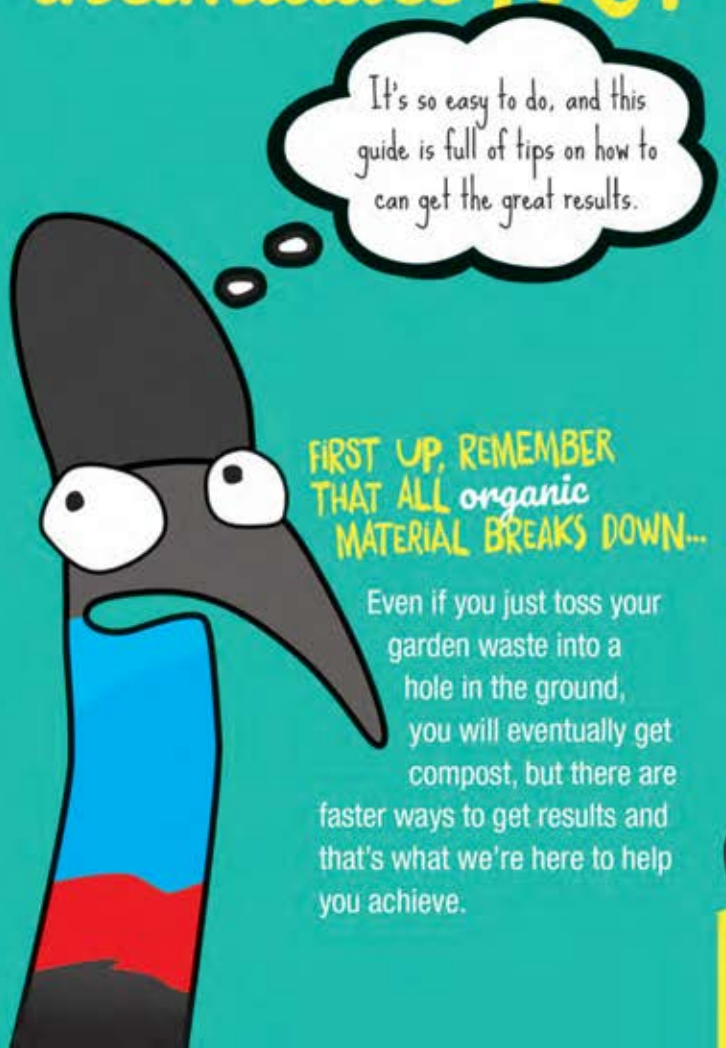
DON'T LET THE THOUGHT OF Composting intimidate YOU!



FIRST UP, REMEMBER THAT ALL organic MATERIAL BREAKS DOWN...

Even if you just toss your garden waste into a hole in the ground, you will eventually get compost, but there are faster ways to get results and that's what we're here to help you achieve.

the ULTIMATE Composting GUIDE!

Composting is one small way we can all help reduce the amount of waste going to landfill - and the rewards for both the enviironment and your garden are huge!

Look out for more tips on how we can all reduce the amount of waste going to landfill online, in our local newspaper and on radio. If we all pull together we all win.

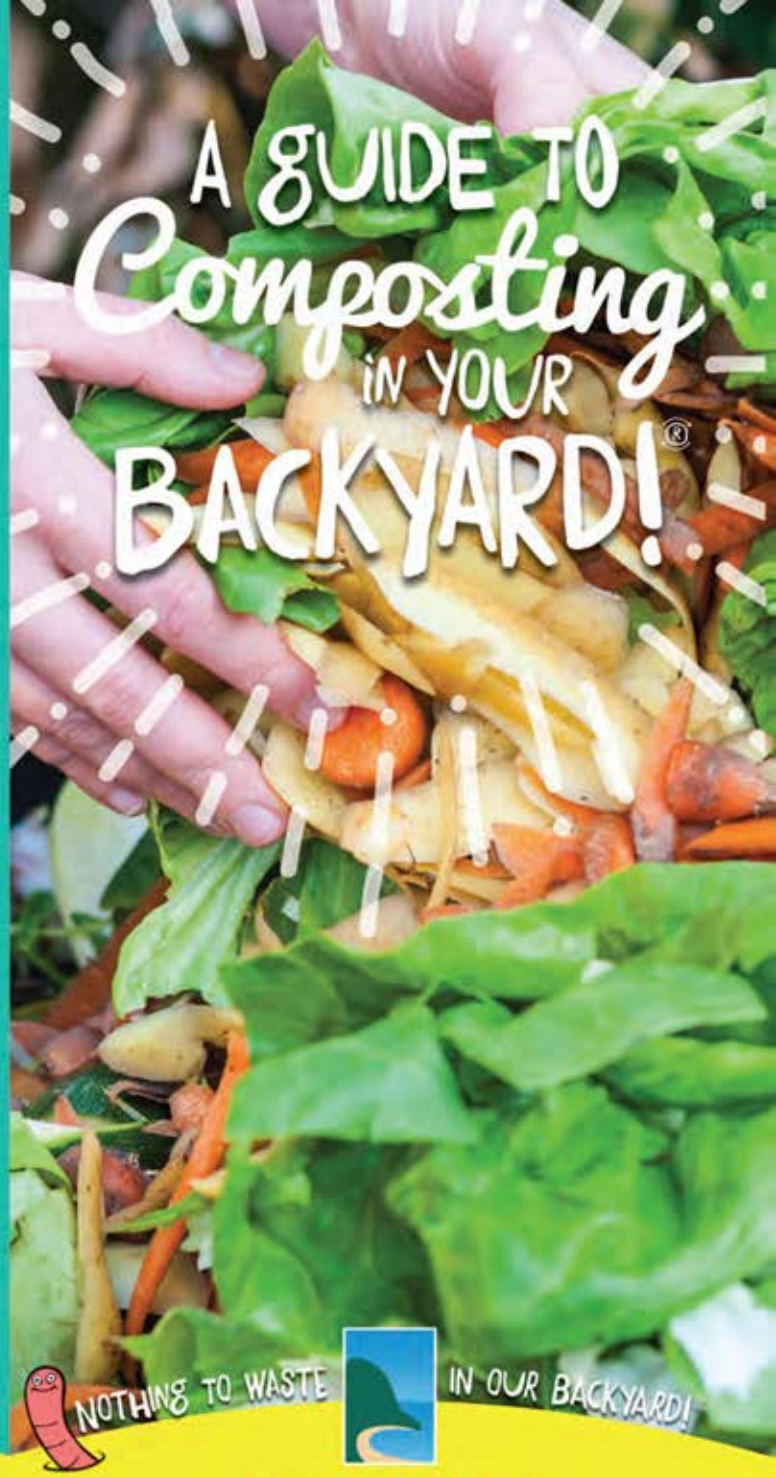
Nothing to waste... we can do that!

Visit cassowarycoast.qld.gov.au for more resources or call us on 1300 763 903 for more ways you can to be involved.

NOTHING TO WASTE IN OUR BACKYARD!®

Cassowary Coast
REGIONAL COUNCIL

A GUIDE TO Composting IN YOUR BACKYARD!®



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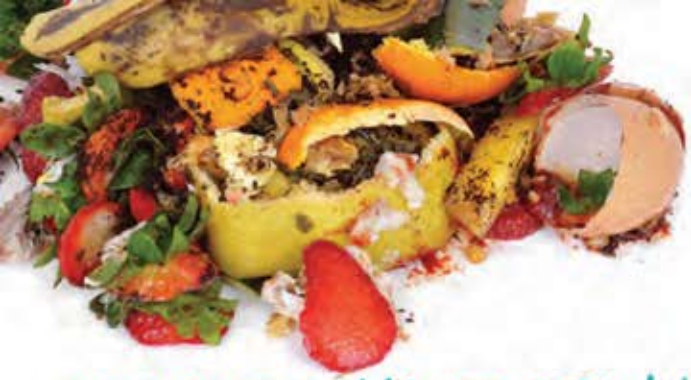


LET'S BREAK IT DOWN...

How quickly compost breaks down depends on four things – moisture, oxygen content, temperature, and a good mix of ingredients.

The perfect compost pile is damp without being wet, like a squeezed out sponge. It should also be well aerated, with plenty of oxygen – the essential element aerobic bacteria need to do their business. Compost also needs a mix of different types of materials. If you use just one thing, like grass clippings, or leaves, then it takes a really long time to break down and deliver nutrients for your garden, but if you have a range of materials – green and brown - and mix them all together, they will break down much more quickly.

GOOD COMPOST BINS promote easy drainage of liquids. Stagnant water can drown the essential, helpful bacteria, and allowing any water to sit is like sending out invites to pests such as mosquitoes or bandicoots. Most commercially available compost bins offer some cover -a lid that keeps rain out of the compost pile, protecting the compost from excess liquid.

Look for a compost bin designed to maximize air flow and circulation. This is because oxygen keeps away the stinky anaerobic microbes that are responsible for creating odours. Keeping your compost well mixed and aerated prevents those anaerobic bacteria from getting established. Oxygen is also fuel for the beneficial aerobic microbes that break down your unwanted trash into finished compost – give them plenty of oxygen and they work quickly. To help aerate your compost, you can use a compost turning tool like a pitchfork – a little bit of hard work never hurt anybody.

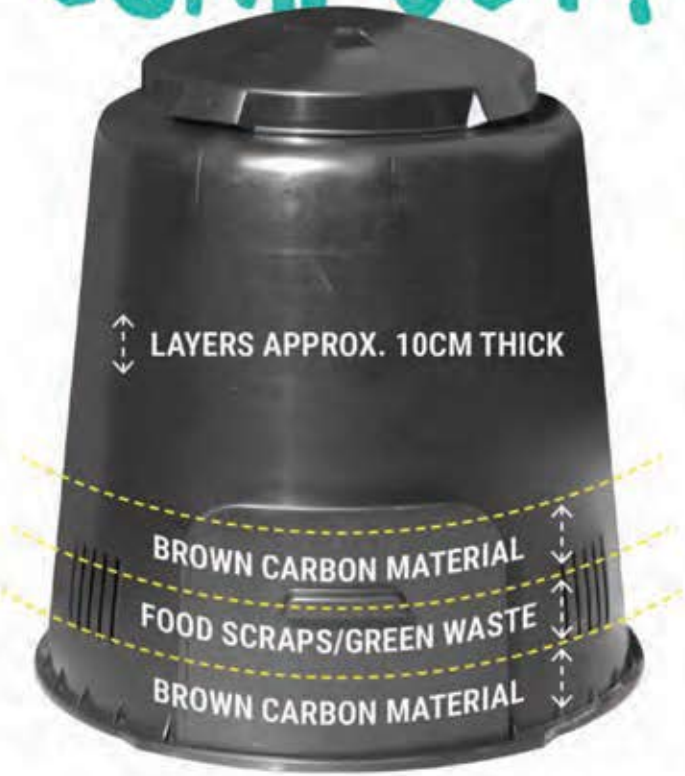
TEMPERATURE IS ANOTHER KEY to the breakdown of compost. Helpful microbes work best at elevated temperatures. The fastest decomposition occurs between 60° and 70°C, microbes generate their own heat as they work, so keeping the compost bin warm in our climate is pretty easy. Position your compost so that the wind doesn't blow over it removing moisture and so that it gets just enough sunlight, with a bit of trial and error you'll get the location just right.

THE INGREDIENTS OF YOUR COMPOST ARE ALSO IMPORTANT... microbes that break down compost do well on a mix of different food sources. They need plenty of cellulose-rich, carbon material along with nitrogen rich kitchen scraps. The ideal mix is 75% "brown" material and 25% "green" scraps by volume.

"Brown" material includes dried grass, leaves, even shredded newspaper. These types of material take longer to break down than "green" vegetable peels and fruit rinds. If your compost is too wet, add more brown material. If you don't have a lot of green material, you may need to add water to the compost.

Green and brown doesn't refer to the actual colour of the stuff you are putting in the composter - it's just shorthand for saying nitrogen rich or carbon rich and a general guide to help you identify the material mix you need for a great compost result.

Have some fun - it's only COMPOST!



THE ULTIMATE compost MIX

Like most things in life - the more effort you put into caring for your compost the more reward you and your garden will get!

Materials	Carbon/Nitrogen	Details
Ashes - wood fire	Neutral	Use wood ash sparingly as a pest deterrent
Banana peels	Nitrogen	Chopping will help break down
Cane Trash	Carbon	Shredding will help break down
Cardboard	Carbon	Shred into small pieces in pile
Cat litter (unused!)	Carbon	Ugh..make sure its unused
Coconut husks	Carbon	Chopping will help break down
Coffee grounds	Nitrogen	Great for nitrogen - worms love 'em!
Cornstalks and cobs	Carbon	A little tricky, so shred and/or break down and mix well into pil
Dryer lint	Carbon	Yep, waste nothing. Moisten a little before adding
Egg shells	Neutral	These break down slowly, so make sure to crush these before adding
Feathers	Nitrogen	Slow to break down, shred if possible to speed up process
Flowers	Nitrogen	Green use as Nitrogen, dried use as carbon
Fruit peels (not citrus)	Nitrogen	Best if you cut them up to small pieces
Green Grass clippings	Nitrogen	When green can be used as a Nitrogen
Dried Grass clippings	Carbon	Make sure they are not too wet - mix with dry leaves for best results
Hair - pet and human	Nitrogen	Good source of nitrogen. Make sure you scatter, so it doesn't clump
Hay	Nitrogen	Make sure it is dry and weathered
Leaves	Carbon	Shredding or chopping will help break down
Manure - herbivore	Nitrogen	Best if known to come from a herbivore
Newspaper - shredded	Carbon	Shredding or chopping will help break down
Sawdust & wood shavings	Carbon	Preferably not from kiln-dried wood
Paper	Carbon	Shredding will help it break down
Peanut hulls	Carbon	Chopping will help break down
Peat moss	Carbon	Also great to add to your garden soil
Pine needles & cones	Carbon	Shredding will help break down
Tea leaves	Carbon	Best if shredded to help it break down quicker
Vegetable scraps	Nitrogen	A great source of nitrogen
Weeds	Carbon	Don't add if you worry about spreading seeds