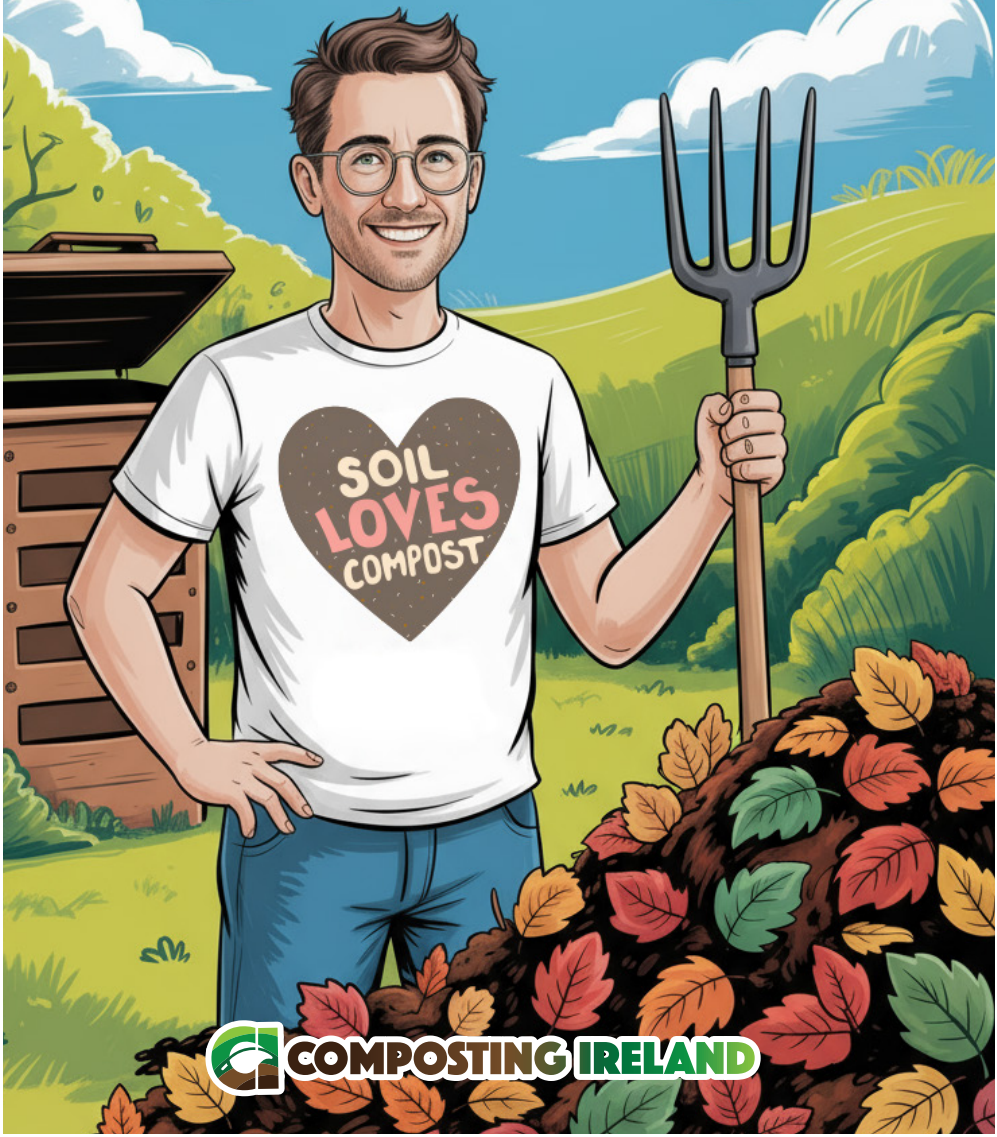
SAVOUR KILKENNY

Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh
Kilkenny County Council

COMPOSTING GUIDE



COMPOSTING IRELAND

Explanation of terms:

Compost pile: Can be in a compost bin or open heap. Keep covered to maintain optimal moisture levels (not too wet or too dry) and to prevent weed seeds from colonising the pile

Wormery: A method of composting food waste quickly using composting worms. Wormeries can be bought or made from wood, an old bath, or any suitable container. Worms eat many types of soft, moist organic matter and convert them into a rich compost called worm castings

Bokashi: A method of fermenting food waste including meat and dairy products. The Bokashi process is anaerobic (happens in the absence of oxygen) so it is managed in an airtight container. Once the food waste has been fermented, it can be added to a suitable composting system. The composting process will allow oxygen to enter, and then the bacteria in the fermented material will begin to act as decomposing organisms and will turn the food waste into compost very quickly

Grasscycling is a method of cutting grass higher and more frequently and mulching the clippings to decompose back into the soil

Turning compost helps to mix and aerate the composting materials and will speed up the composting process. Use a pitchfork for an open compost pile, or a special compost aerating tool for enclosed compost bins. Some composting systems contain a built-in mechanism for rotating or mixing the contents

Further information and guides can be found at

https://compostingireland.ie/resources/

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Composting is the conversion of once-living materials from plants and animals into humus or compost. This is stable organic matter that is dark and crumbly, sweet-smelling, and is a good conditioner and fertiliser for soil.

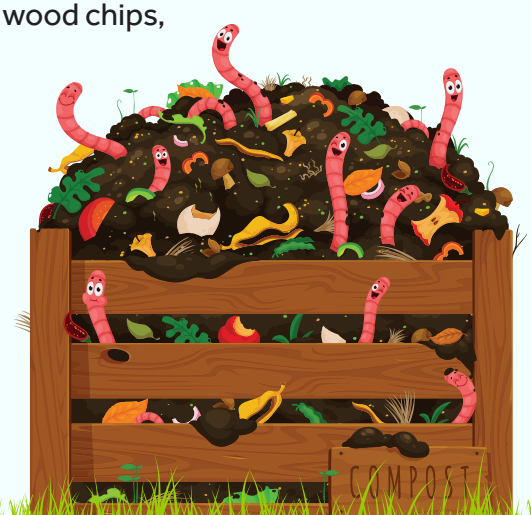
Decomposing organisms do the work: bacteria, fungi, and worms are just a few of the many living creatures that help to make compost. If conditions are suitable, these organisms live within the organic matter and feed on it, converting it into compost

Conditions for composting need to supply both the right level of moisture and sufficient oxygen, with a mix of green and brown materials to feed and sustain the decomposing organisms

Green materials are soft and moist, and include materials such as food waste, fruit and vegetables, green leafy plant matter, and grass cuttings. These materials are high in nitrogen. Green materials provide the moisture and a lot of nutrients to feed the decomposing organisms. If there are too many green materials, the compost pile will be wet, sludgy, and smelly and won't decompose properly.

Brown materials include small twigs, wood chips, sawdust, autumn leaves, paper, cardboard, straw and hay. These materials are high in carbon. Brown materials add bulk and structure to the compost pile to allow air to filter through, as well as providing essential nutrients.

If there are too many brown materials, the compost pile will decompose very slowly.



Best methods of composting different materials at home:

Fruit and veg waste, tea bags, coffee grounds (these are green materials)	(1) Mix into compost pile with lots of brown materials, or
	(2) Use a wormery
Cooked foods, meat, dairy (these are green materials)	(1) Mix with lots of brown materials in a vermin-proof composting bin, or
	(2) Bokashi pre-composting. Bokashi fermented materials can be put in a wormery or buried in a compost pile mixed with lots of brown materials
Grass cuttings (these are green materials)	(1) Practice "Grasscycling" to reduce amount of cuttings collected, or
	(2) Mix grass cuttings with at least an equal quantity of brown materials and add to compost pile. If you don't have enough brown materials, spread out the grass cuttings and allow them to partially dry before you compost them. This will reduce the amount of moisture and nitrogen
Mixed garden materials (weeds, stalks, old plants, and clippings) (these are generally a good mix of green (soft) and brown (fibrous) materials)	Chop into small pieces and add to compost pile, adding water if necessary
Autumn leaves (these are brown materials)	(1) Gather leaves in bags or a simple wire enclosure. Keep the leaves moist and ensure that oxygen can get in (punch holes in bags). Leaves will turn to a valuable type of compost called leaf mould in 1-2 years, or
	(2) Use leaves as a brown material to mix with your green materials for composting