

# Composting

## IN THE FALL

Fall is a great time to gather materials to add to your compost pile. Composting can help your soil retain nutrients and moisture. Consider leaf & perennial composting to provide winter homes for ladybugs.



### LATE FALL COMPOSTING TIPS

- Till the annuals in. Most annuals that have finished fruiting can be tilled into the garden. The larger bodied plants such as tomatoes, broccoli and dahlias can be chopped up into smaller pieces to make it easier to compost.
- Let the perennials get blackened by frost & leave in the ground to provide homes for the good bugs like the ladybug or cut the foliage and till back into the garden or save in bags to be added to your compost pile.
- Mow the leaves back into the lawn, using a mulcher or the highest setting on your lawnmower.
- Leaf composting - leave under trees & shrubs to compost naturally
  - use only deciduous leaves that are chemical free & fungus free.
  - make a leaf pile 4' in diameter & 3' high. Include a layer of soil between every foot of leaves; moisten but not saturate the pile. Put a plastic sheet over top of the pile to keep it from getting waterlogged. Weight the edges down with rocks. The pile will compost itself in about 4 – 6 months. The leaf compost is best used as a soil amendment rather than a fertilizer as it is low in nutrients.
- Oak leaves break down slowly aerating our clay soil, making the soil lighter and helping with retaining moisture. Spread the leaves over the garden.
- Leaves are rich in carbon so are easily incorporated into the compost bin.
  - you need 2/3 carbons (brown) - (leaves, twigs, straw, shrub pruning's, dried garden waste) and 1/3 nitrogen (green) - (grass clippings, kitchen scraps, fruit and vegetable peelings, coffee grounds & other fresh materials.
  - Brown – accelerates the composting, eliminates odor & helps to produce a light, fluffy compost.
  - do not use dairy or meat!
- Bag extra leaves to be used for the compost pile in the spring and through the summer.
- Use compost accelerator.
- Save wood ash to sprinkle in the compost pile.