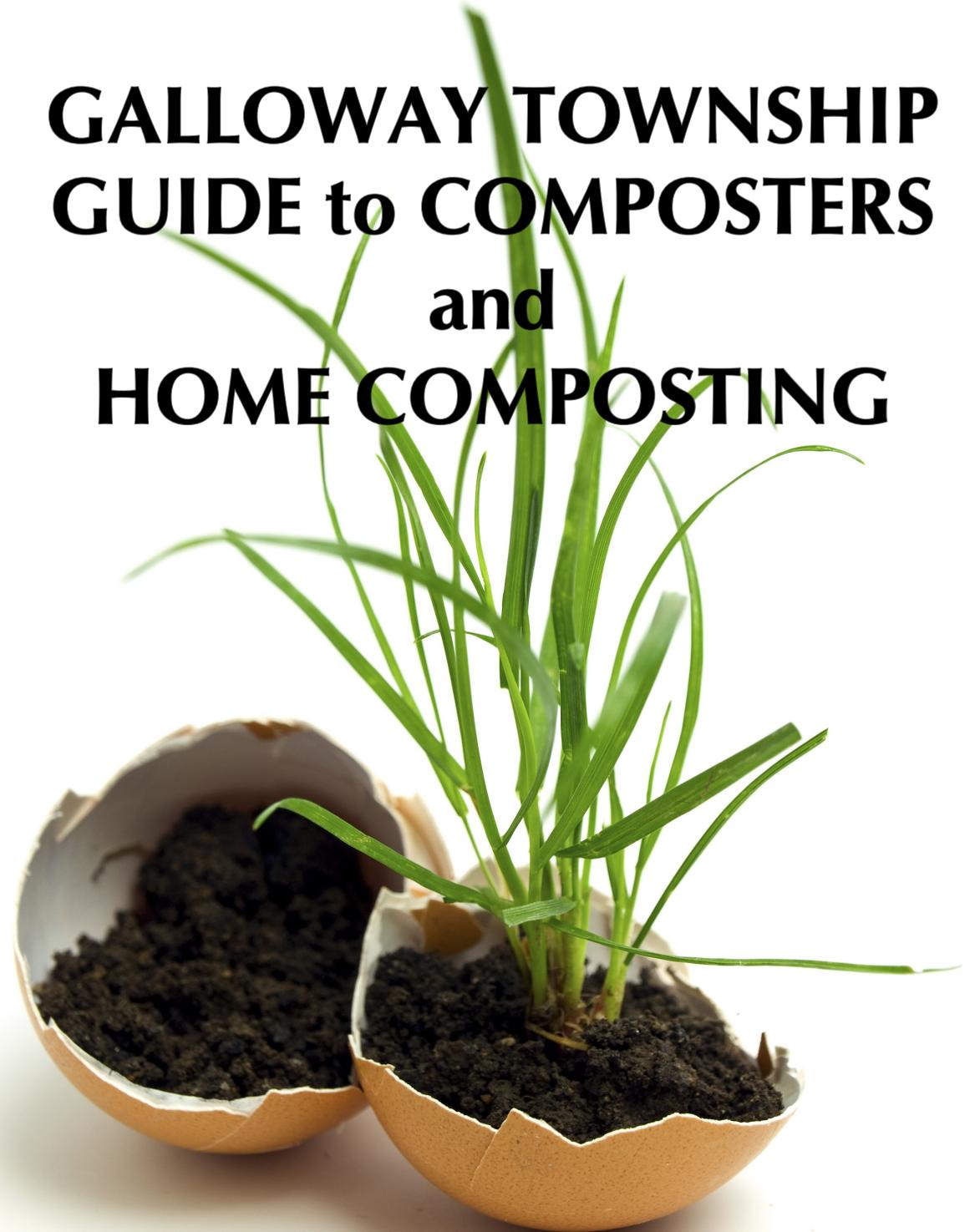


# **GALLOWAY TOWNSHIP GUIDE to COMPOSTERS and HOME COMPOSTING**

**THE GALLOWAY TOWNSHIP OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY  
(609)652-3700 ext 209  
[www.gtnj.org](http://www.gtnj.org)**



## What is Composting?

Composting is the natural decomposition process during which organic materials (kitchen scraps, grass and leaves) break down and create a nutrient-rich soil amendment called "humus." Composting is Nature's way of recycling.

## Why Compost?

Home composting allows you to manage your waste on your own property by turning it into a useful end product. It is also an effective way to cut down on the amount of kitchen and yard waste you put at the curb. The kitchen scraps that you would normally throw away can be combined with your leaves and other yard debris to make a wonderful, natural fertilizer.

## What to Compost?

### **COMPOST:**

Fruit & Vegetable Scraps

Citrus Rinds, Apple Cores

Stale Bread & Grains

Dry or Cooked Pasta (Plain)

Shredded Paper & Newspaper

Paper Plates & Napkins

Coffee Grounds & Filters

Paper Towels & Cardboard Rolls

Toilet Paper Cardboard Rolls

Garden & Grass Clippings

Rabbit, Chicken, Cow &

Horse Manure

Corncobs

Plain Popcorn

Eggshells

Peanut Shells

Nutshells

Paper Tea Bags

Leaves, Twigs

Bark

Wood Chips

### **DO NOT COMPOST:**

Meat, Poultry, Fish or

Seafood Scraps

Fat, Grease, Lard, Oils or

Bones

Dairy Products

Treated or Painted Wood

Coal or Charcoal Ash

Yard Trimmings treated

with Chemical Pesticides

## Where to Start?

First, select an area of your yard that is conducive to composting. This should be a spot that receives equal amounts of sun and shade throughout the day. Next, choose what to compost in—if anything. Many ready-made bins are available for purchase, or you can build your own. You can even create a simple open-air pile often called a "hot pile."

## Grass: "Cut it and Leave it" Program

The best thing you can do for your lawn is cut the grass and leave the grass clippings. By doing so, you achieve several things:

- ✿ You return nitrogen to the soil, creating a healthier lawn
- ✿ You lower the water requirement of the lawn
- ✿ You save time and energy by not bagging grass clippings
- ✿ You save money by not buying harsh chemical fertilizers
- ✿ You save money on yard waste disposal
- ✿ You reduce the amount of waste entering our landfills when you combine this practice with home composting

## The Process:

A mulching mower is ideal, as it grinds the grass clippings into a fine spray that filters down through the lawn and reaches the soil, but a regular mower can be used if you mow more frequently. Even with a mulching mower, you should only mow the top third of the lawn, leaving grass height between 2.5"-3.5" high. The higher the grass, the healthier the lawn, as tall grass will shade the soil, cool the roots and block weed growth.

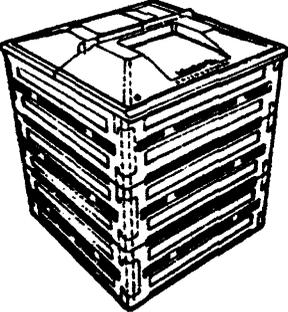
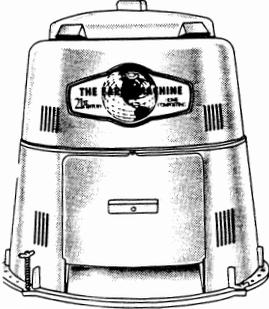
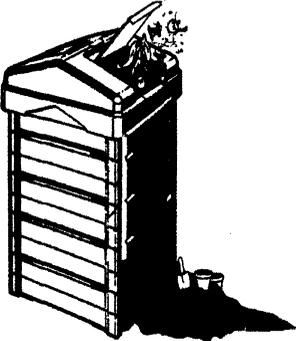
## What About Thatch?

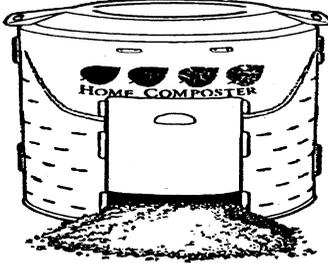
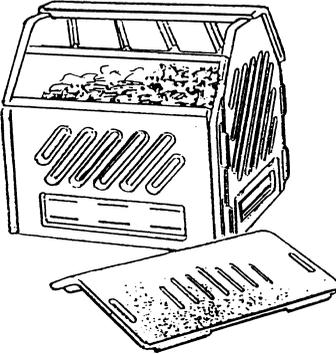
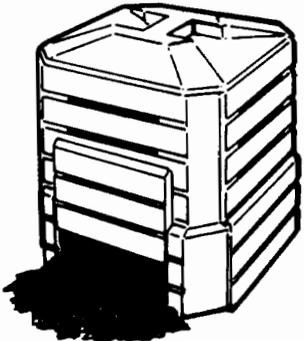
Lawn experts agree that grass clippings will not contribute to thatch problems. Thatch is formed by the accumulation of dead roots and stems. The more you fertilize and water your lawn, the faster it grows and the faster thatch accumulates.

## Did You Know?

Gas mowers emit hydrocarbons and oxides of nitrogen (the principle ingredients of smog), particulate matter (damaging to the respiratory system), carbon monoxide (a poisonous gas) and carbon dioxide (contributor to global warming). Galloway Township is committed to reducing greenhouse gasses, so residents are encouraged to use low- or no-emission mowers like corded or battery-powered electric mowers. These mowers are lighter and quieter than gas mowers. Better yet, consider a traditional push mower for an amazing workout.



COMPOSTER MODELS	CAPACITY	SPECIAL FEATURES
<b>BIOSTACK</b> 	13 cu. ft.	<p>60% recycled plastic.</p> <p>Can be made taller or shorter by adding or removing stackable tiers.</p> <p>Large top opening allows for easy turning.</p>
<b>EARTH MACHINE</b> 	12 cu. ft.	<p>Post-consumer recycled plastic. Snap assembly.</p> <p>Twist lid to open/lock or control ventilation.</p> <p>Pegs included to secure unit to the ground.</p>
<b>GARDEN GOURMET</b> 	11 cu. ft.	<p>Patented venting system to enhance decomposition.</p> <p>Airflow controlled by adjusting the size of the vents.</p> <p>Recycled plastic. One year guarantee.</p>

COMPOSTER MODELS	CAPACITY	SPECIAL FEATURES
<b>HOME COMPOSTER</b> 	13 cu. ft.	<p>Large top opening for easy turning of compost.</p> <p>Locking lid.</p> <p>Large sliding door for easy access to compost.</p> <p>100% recycled plastic.</p>
<b>RUBBERMAID</b> 	18 cu. ft.	<p>Durable, double wall construction.</p> <p>Two side doors provide easy access to finished compost.</p>
<b>SOILSAVER</b> 	12 cu. ft.	<p>100% military-grade recycled plastic. Ten year guarantee.</p> <p>Two sliding doors provide easy access to compost.</p> <p>Locking lid with holes for rain to penetrate.</p>

COMPOSTER MODELS	CAPACITY	SPECIAL FEATURES
<b>SUN-MAR 400 TUMBLER</b> 	<b>100-Gallon</b>	<p><b>Ball bearings make for easy turning.</b></p> <p><b>Odorless and pest proof design.</b></p> <p><b>UV stabilized, 100% recyclable polyethylene.</b></p>
<b>TORO</b> 	<b>12.5 bushels</b>	<p><b>100% Post-consumer recycled plastic.</b></p> <p><b>Multiple slots provide easy access for turning and aeration.</b></p>

## Arranging Your Bin or Pile

For best results, mix equal parts “brown” (or carbon-rich) material and “green” (or nitrogen-rich) material. Brown material is often dry matter like twigs, dry leaves, and nutshells. Green material is often wet matter like fruit peels, vegetable ends and grass clippings. To help materials break down or decompose more quickly, reduce larger-sized items to smaller-sized portions. Water is important, but often rain is sufficient. Air is also important, so materials should be aerated or turned regularly —especially when the weather is hot.

### A Sample “Recipe”

<b>6 parts</b>	<b>Dry leaves</b>	<b>Browns</b>
<b>3 parts</b>	<b>Food scraps</b>	<b>Greens</b>
<b>3 parts</b>	<b>Fresh grass clippings</b>	<b>Greens</b>
<b>Add:</b>	<b>Water &amp; Air (an occasional turning)</b>	

### Some Helpful Hints:

- ☼ Heat speeds up decomposition, so black compost bins often make faster compost than open-air piles. Cover an open-air pile with black plastic film to accelerate the process.
- ☼ Do not compost meat, fats, bones, oils or dairy products. These create odor and attract pests.
- ☼ If your compost has an odor, it may be too wet with too much “green” (or nitrogen-rich) materials. Sprinkle some garden lime sparingly and then balance the mixture with dry “brown” (or carbon-rich) materials like wood chips.
- ☼ If your compost has an odor, it may not be getting enough air and ventilating or aerating it may be necessary. In lieu of aerating materials by turning them with a pitchfork, you can poke rods into a compost pile to make air passages.
- ☼ If your compost is too dry, add a little water or more wet “green” materials as you turn the pile.

### When is the Compost Finished?

Your compost is ready when the mixed materials have decomposed and become “humus” - a dark organic matter that looks like soil and has an earthy, clean aroma. You can use this finished product in a variety of ways. When added to vegetable gardens, it is a source of non-toxic fertilizer. When added to flower gardens, it helps to retain moisture in the soil. Lawns built with compost will drain better and demand less water. A ring of compost around a tree will help to feed its root system.