

The Science of Compost

This activity was created by Katy.

Composting is nature's way of recycling. But how does it work? Composting is when organic waste is broken down by tiny microorganisms called bacteria. Once broken down, it can be reused in nature as nutrient-rich soil to grow new plants. But not everything can be composted. When we compost, we have to consider if a material is organic waste. And remember, if waste cannot be composted, we might be able to recycle it! Let's look at examples of compostable materials and non-compostable materials in the chart below.

Compostable Materials	Non-Compostable Materials
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruit and vegetable scraps • Egg shells • Coffee grounds • Plant/grass clippings • Leaves • Paper towels • Napkins • Newspaper/paper products • Dryer lint 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meat • Dairy products • Plastics • Metal • Glass • Styrofoam • Ceramics

Green and Brown Materials

Within the list of compostable materials, we have green and brown materials. Green materials have a lot of nitrogen, and brown materials have a lot of carbon. We need both green and brown materials in our composter so we have both nitrogen and carbon in our compost. Let's sort the green and brown materials into the chart below!

Green Materials	Brown Materials
-	-
-	-
-	-
-	-

