

Waite Park Composting Procedures

BEGINNING OF SEASON

1. City compost: Gardeners may use the city compost, delivered in the fall, to cover plots to prevent weeds from taking root before the garden crops can be planted. This compost is in the middle of the garden.
2. Compost bins (West, East, and Center): Each compost area has two bins. Combine the winter compost into the *Closed to New Plant Material* bins. This combined *Closed to New Plant Material* bins will become available for use later in the season and can be used to inoculate the new compost materials in the newly emptied *Add New Plant Materials Bin* as it fills during the spring cleanup and over the summer months.
3. Put up *Add New Plant Materials* and *Closed to New Plant Material* signs. Put additional boards across the front if needed.
4. Establish a BAD Weed Pile beside the compost where quack grass, thistle, and creeping Charlie can be composted in a very hot pile. Because of their invasive nature, these weeds cannot be put into the compost bins used for garden plots. Our garden bins do not get hot enough to compost these weeds.

BLACK GOLD COMPOST RECIPE

Carbon to Nitrogen ratio: 30:1 (2 browns to every green)

- CARBON: stems, leaves, peels, wood, bark dust, shredded brown paper bags, corn stalks, coffee
- NITROGEN: green plant material
- **Put NO plastic, NO tomato plants, NO creeping Charlie, NO quack grass, NO thistle, NO diseased plants, NO weed seeds** into the compost bins. Carry plastic markers and pots out to your own trash can or recycling bin.
- Feed the weeds to the **BAD Weed Pile** and chop.
- Carry out diseased and tomato plants to your own trash or yard waste.

COMMUNITY GARDENERS

WEEKLY THROUGHOUT THE GROWING SEASON:

1. Stir and water the *Closed to New Plant Material* bin.
2. Put your BLACK GOLD ingredients (see below) into the *Add New Plant Materials* bin, chop them and stir them in. This bin will not be harvested this year. Inoculate with compost from the *Closed to New Plant Material* bin, and water. The compost should feel like a wet sponge.
3. Feed the BAD Weed Pile when needed and chop. This pile needs to become very hot during the summer months.

LATER IN THE SEASON

Harvest the *Closed to New Plant Material* bin compost with all its microbes and fungi to mulch around your garden plants, the garden's perennial garden plants, and around the fruit trees, spreading 3-6-inch layer outside of a 1-2-foot ring from base of the tree. Fluff it occasionally so it doesn't compact. If it gets too wet, rake the mulch away from the tree.

DURING THE SEASON

Consider lasagna composting right in your garden bed. Layer the ingredients across a section of your plot and cover with your plot's soil. Chop and water.