

Organic Matter from Your Yard

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Leaves - There is no need to compost leaves. They can be mixed directly into your garden areas in the fall or very early spring. By next spring, planting time, they will be decomposed enough so that they will add valuable organic matter to the soil. Burning leaves is a mortal sin. If you do compost leaves it is best to mix them with other material. Leaves tend to lay flat and mush together. This slows down the decay process because of the lack of water and air.

Grass clippings - Because of the high moisture content, the grass packs together, creating a situation for poor air circulation. It will turn into a moldy mess. If this is mixed with some coarse material it will rot quicker and mold less. Like leaves it can be mixed directly into the garden in the fall or very early spring.

Coarse green material - Material such as weeds, pulled plants, and straw, etc. fall into this category. This material should be allowed to rot in a pile before use. It is hard to handle in the garden in its whole form.

Coarse woody material - If buried in the pile small twigs will rot. The larger the size, the more difficult or close too impossible to rot.

Sawdust - Sawdust will rot and create good compost if mixed with other material. By itself is a very slow to decompose. It can be mixed directly into the soil in small amounts. Probably use 1-2" into 4-6" of soil.

Kitchen wastes - This can be a source of some organic matter. Avoid meat, fat and other animal products. Vegetable material like fruit, lettuce, coffee grounds, misc. all can be used.

Ashes - These are usually from the fireplace. Not a good source of organic matter because all of the materials structure has been lost in the burning process. Used in small amounts they will add some potassium to the soil.