

Backyard Composting

One productive fall gardening project can be getting a good compost pile going to bolster garden and flower bed soils for the coming spring. Composting also is a great way to recycle waste material that may end up as landfill if not recycled. In Oklahoma, yard trimmings and grass clippings can make up as much as 25 percent of a community's waste. Costs of transporting and landfilling yard wastes can be reduced if communities encourage and practice backyard yard waste composting.

Yard wastes, especially grass clippings, are usually high in nutrient content. When yard waste is composted, bacteria use air and water to break down plant materials into nutrient rich compost. These nutrients can be beneficial to soils, plants and trees in the yard when applied as mulch or a soil amendment.

Compost systems can be simple and slow as a heap or pile, which is turned occasionally during the year. A more structured and complex system requires containers, more turning, and produces finished compost in a few months. In compost piles, water is added to green and brown vegetation layers. As decomposed plant material, compost is an excellent soil amendment. Compost can loosen clay soils, help sandy soil retain moisture and nutrients, and retain soil moisture when used as a mulch. Beneficial bacteria and organisms in compost assist plants in absorbing nutrients. Thus, natural materials are recycled in a home yard environment.

For more information on setting up backyard composting please feel free to call the OSU Extension office (580) 622-3016, or come by.

John Holman, Extension Educator Ag/Youth Development (580)622-3016

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