



Composting 101

Equipment, Tools & Bins

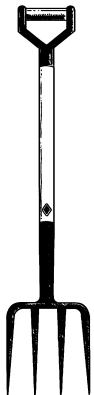
General Tools

Placing yard waste in a pile requires a few hand tools. A good yard rake and pitchfork work well. (*A shovel will work, but a pitchfork is easier.*) Some people like the convenience of a cart or wheelbarrow for moving debris or leaves.



Some gardeners stand a pole upright in compost piles and wiggle it each time new materials are added. (*Chinese gardeners do the same with thick bamboo rods.*) Twigs or sticks would accomplish the same effect by creating air pockets in the pile.

Some garden supply dealers now sell a compost-aeration tool or composting wand. This tool has a pair of small "arms" on the end that close as the end is inserted into the compost pile. When you pull the wand out, the arms open, aerating as it comes up.

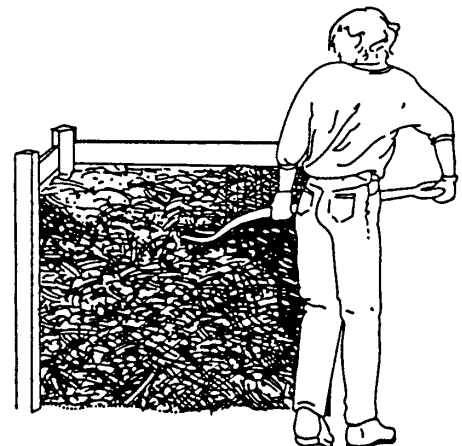


If you want to keep a watchful eye on your compost pile, you can purchase an insertable thermometer that tells you the temperature of the pile's center. Different bacteria thrive in various temperatures and the temperature partially controls the life cycle of the compost world. By watching the temperature, you can help control the composting process by turning the pile at strategic times.



Composting Bins & Containers

Many people prefer a holding bin of some sort to keep composting piles neater or confined to a smaller space. Bins can be purchased or built and come in a variety of sizes,



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prices, and complexities. Bins can be round or square and made of anything including bricks, blocks, lumber, or wire. Bin composting requires the same tools as compost piles. Be sure to keep the bin four feet or lower for easy access for turning. Compost tumblers or barrels are designed to take some of the work out of composting and require no tools.

