



Composting 101

Water

Taken as a microorganism farm, the compost needs tending to its moisture requirements just as the farmer tends to the irrigation of crops and the ventilation of livestock enclosures. **Compost should be about as moist as a well wrung-out sponge.** It should be moist to touch but yield no liquid when squeezed. This provides a thin film of moisture on materials for the decomposer organisms while still allowing air into their surroundings.

If the pile is too wet, it should be turned (*pulled apart and restacked*) to bring air back into the pile and loosen the materials for better drainage and air drying.

If the pile is too dry, it may be soaked from above with a trickling hose. A more effective method is to turn the pile and rewet the material as it is being turned. Certain materials will shed water or become damp only on their surface. Dead leaves, sawdust, straw, some dead weed and vegetables must be gradually wetted until they glisten with moisture. Then, they should be mixed until the water is absorbed into their fibers.

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