

Composting Tools and Site Selection

There are many ways to create sustainable and nutritious compost for your garden using scraps from your kitchen and garden! These methods are all different but require similar tools and site requirements to create and maintain your composting system.

Basic Tools for Composting Systems

Covered Bucket	Handy to store food waste in your home before transferring to pile.
Pitch fork	Forks with round tines (four to six) works well to turn or move compost.
Gloves	Protect your hands while handling compost.
Hoses	Help to maintain compost moisture levels.
Spade or shovel	Useful for digging out final compost and chopping materials
Pruners, loppers, or sharp spade	Can be used as shredders for larger materials.
Screen	A screen for sifting finished compost from decomposing materials. (This can be made from 1/4" hardware cloth and a 2' x 3' x 4" wood frame.)
Wheelbarrow (or garden cart)	Essential to transport compost, yard wastes, etc.
Compost thermometer	Optional, useful to determine exact temperature. 140 degrees is necessary to kill off weed seeds and kill off all organic matter



A composting site should be:

- **Within permitted areas:** Check local zoning ordinances for any setback requirements or specific backyard composting rules, i.e., no food wastes permitted, etc.
- **Near water source:** A large quantity of water is essential to maintain the compost pile (especially hot compost). Access to a hose or irrigation system is ideal.
- **Good drainage:** Keep the pile or bin on well drained, slightly-sloped soil, to avoid excess moisture.
- **Away from wood on buildings:** The heat, bacteria and fungi generated in the composting process may discolor or degrade wood siding if placed in contact with it.
- **Near the destination of the compost:** If possible, locate the pile or bin close to where you want to use the compost, to avoid transporting the heavy material long distances.
- **Out of wind and hot sun:** In the summer, keep the pile or bin shaded to avoid excess heat. In the fall, spring and winter, the sun's warmth will help extend the biological activity. Protect it from the wind, since it will dehydrate the pile in any season.
- **Out of sight:** Consider planting shrubs, tall grasses, etc. or installing attractive fencing or arbors