



If you're looking for a simple, easy, inexpensive way to help the Earth's climate, this is it!

What happens to organic waste in landfills?

When organic waste is buried in landfills, anaerobic bacteria (bacteria that do not require oxygen) cause it to rot and produce methane.

What happens to organic waste when composted?

When organic waste is composted, instead, aerobic bacteria (bacteria that require oxygen) break it down into usable material without producing any greenhouse gases.

How does composting help our climate?

Composting helps reduce methane emissions from Lanark County's landfills and lowers your carbon footprint. Composting is a key action that will help us reach our climate goals in Lanark County.

What are other benefits of composting?

- Reuses and repurposes materials that would otherwise end up in landfills
- Reduces your waste
- Improves soil for gardening
- Cost saving, reduces the need to purchase soil amendments and fertilizers
- Reduces leachate from landfills that could potentially contaminate groundwater
- An opportunity to practice good environmental stewardship and personal satisfaction
- Learning opportunity for people of all ages
- Reduces odours produced by your kitchen garbage

Things You Need to Know Before You Get Started

What can I add to my composter?

- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Tea leaves
- Coffee grounds
- Non-glossy paper and cardboard
- Leaves
- Grass and plant clippings
- Egg and nut shells

What should I avoid adding to my composter?

- Plastic of any kind, including produce stickers
- Glass
- Metal
- Meats, fats and oils
- Milk and dairy products
- Pet droppings
- Glossy paper products
- Perennial weeds or weeds with seed heads
- Plants sprayed with herbicides or pesticides

The Two Types of Waste Your Composter Needs

Brown Matter- Dead Leaves, twigs, egg and nutshells, wood-chips, newspaper, cardboard, hay, straw

Green Matter-Fruits and vegetable scraps, coffee grounds, tea leaves, plant clippings, grass

Whether you are indoor composting or outdoor composting, the items you add to your compost will be the same just added at different ratios.



Tips and Tricks- Collecting Your Compost

- When choosing a compost bin for collecting inside, choose a bin with a lid that is made out of a material that is not porous (metal) as this can hold unwanted odours overtime.
- Take your compost out frequently and wash the bin. Using a biodegradable liner (ie. newspaper) can also help keep your bin clean.
- Sometimes a compost bin can cause unwanted odours inside your home, if you have space for your composter in your freezer, this can be a great place to store your compost bin and add to it while reducing odours inside your home.



Backyard Composting



Check with your municipality to see if you are eligible for a rebate on your backyard composter!

Choosing a Location/Site Preparation

- Choose a location that is level and well drained.
- Avoid placing your composter in direct sunlight.
- Compost can produce odours, choose a site for your composter that is close enough to your house that it is accessible year round, but in a location that is not close to windows or outdoor entertainment areas.
- Stir/disturb soil in your desired composting site.
- Put newspaper or small branches on top to help with drainage.

Outdoor compost should be a 50:50 ratio of brown to green matter.

Choosing Your Backyard Set-Up

Continuous Composters - Allows you to continuously put food and yard waste on top of decomposing matter to generate a constant stream of compost. (ie. Compost pile, stationary, or custom set-ups).

Batch Composters- Generate compost in batches, meaning you have to save up organic matter in separate piles until you're ready to make a batch. This is a great option for small gardens (ie. Compost tumblers).

Maintenance and Upkeep

- Stir your compost regularly (weekly or biweekly) to promote aeration and aerobic decomposition, this can be done using a pitchfork.
- Keep your compost moist, this is particularly important in the heat of summer.
- Add leaves and grass as needed to help with the composting process (50:50 ratio of brown to green matter).
- Place food scraps underneath leaves, straw or other brown matter to avoid animals visiting your compost.

Tips, Tricks and Troubleshooting

- It is not necessary to add bioactivator or similar products to your pile, keeping some of the finished compost between batches can accomplish the same goal.
- Compost pile needs to be kept moist but not standing in water.
- Keep the pile aerated to prevent anaerobic decomposition from occurring.
- If your compost is unbalanced with more green matter it will produce odours. This can be fixed by adding more brown matter to your pile.
- If material is taking a long time to break down, you may not be providing proper aeration or moisture to your pile, this can be fixed by mixing your pile and spraying with water.

Indoor Composting



Maintenance and Upkeep

- Turn compost regularly to promote aeration as oxygen assists in the decomposition process.
- Make sure to remove stickers from produce before adding.
- Add shredded paper, leaves and water to maintain the proper brown/green and wet/dry ratio.
- Adding 1-2 cups of soil with brown matter can also help with the composting process.
- To avoid unwanted odours and fruit flies, food waste should not be left as the top layer, adding a thick layer of shredded newspaper on top can help with fruit flies.
- Make sure that green matter is not in large pieces when added, these pieces will take longer to break down.

Other Styles of Indoor Composting

- Vermiculture
- Bokashi



Choosing Your Indoor Set-Up

- Lidded plastic storage containers, garbage cans and buckets can all be used.
- Ideally, your indoor composting bin should fit your chosen space comfortably, while still having enough depth to hold more than a weeks worth of organic matter.
- If you're choosing a lidded container, you will need to drill holes in the top to let air in to facilitate the decomposition process.

Tips, Tricks and Troubleshooting

- If your compost is unbalanced with more green matter it will produce odours. This can be fixed by adding more brown matter.
- If material is taking a long time to break down, you may not be providing proper aeration or moisture to your pile, this can be fixed by mixing your compost or adding water if necessary.
- Compost should be damp, but not standing in water.

Indoor compost should be maintained at 3 parts brown matter to 1 part green matter (3:1 ratio).



The Benefits of Using Your Compost

- Enriches soil, helping with drainage and moisture retention, and the suppression of plant diseases and pests.
- Reduces the need for chemical fertilizers.
- Encourages the production of beneficial bacteria and fungi that break down organic matter to create humus, a rich nutrient-filled material.
- Compost helps to raise the pH level of acidic soils and lower the pH in alkaline soil.



Other Composting Options in Lanark County

ShareWaste Application-Give your Waste a Second Chance!

ShareWaste is a great application that facilitates the sharing of organic waste in communities around the world. To sign up for FREE visit: <https://sharewaste.com/> and follow the instructions.

- Select if you are a donor, host, business, or cafe.
- Create an account using an email address and your first name.
- Edit your profile by putting your name, about yourself, location, and email address.
- As a host let people know what kind of organic scraps you are looking for (ie. fruits, veggies, paper, leaves) and what you are not looking for (ie. meat, oils).
- As a donor let people know what kind of organic waste you are offering.
- To look for compost in your area, visit the listing map and see how close your nearest compost donor or host is.
- Click on the icon on the map to see what kind of compost is being offered, is needed, or what kind of compost is not accepted.
- Reach out to the donor or host that fits your organic waste requirements and arrange pick up or drop off.



ShareWaste

Municipal Green Bin Programs

Municipal green bin programs are an effective way to compost. They take items that are not suitable for backyard composter (ie. meats and bones), eliminate the work, and produce high quality compost used for municipal planting and soil regeneration.

This option is currently only available in the town of Perth.

Leaves and Yard Waste- Leave the Leaves

Leave your rakes and leaf blowers in the shed next fall and let your leaves decompose! This is a great way to promote soil health and wildlife populations that rely on leaf cover for over wintering, lifecycles, and food.