

STEPS IN MAKING A COMPOST HEAP

Step 1



Choose a site for composting, preferably under shade but not too close to the tree trunk

1. Measure out an area 1m wide and 1 m long, a similar area must be allowed for turning the heap. Loosen the soil where the compost is to be made. This will allow close contact of the material to be composted with the ground.

Step 2



Arrange a 30 cm thick foundation of twigs and small branches

2. Arrange a 30 cm thick foundation of twigs and small branches, which will allow drainage and ventilation, then sprinkle some water on this layer.

3. Add a second layer composed of chopped coarse plant material like dry grass, and straw, upto 15 cm thick and then sprinkle water.

4. Add a third layer of animal manure of upto 5cm deep, sprinkle with urine and wood ash if possible.

5. Add a fourth layer of fresh but wilted plant material, green weeds, leguminous forage like tithonia diversifolia upto 15-20cm thick.

6. Sprinkle a mixture of ash or charcoal with little top soil or old compost

Step 3-6



Continue to build the heap, repeating the process described in step 3-6

Step 7



Cover the heap with a 10cm thick layer of top soil then a layer dry grass or plant leaves

7. Add more layers by repeating the process again, starting again with dry grass, then animal manure, green plant materials and top soil; remember to sprinkle water on each layer and build up the heap to a height of 1.5 m

8. Cover the heap with a 10cm thick layer of top soil. To prevent excessive loss of moisture the heap can be covered with dry grass or plant leaves.

9. The progress of composting can be checked regularly by using a dry stick driven diagonally into the compost heap. The stick should be pulled out regularly to check whether it is warm, an indication that the composting process is still going on and

whether it is moist. If the stick is dry, sprinkle some water.

10. After three weeks of decomposition, the lower layers of composted materials are likely to have decomposed. The stick should be cold and most likely coated with a white substance, at this point the heap is ready for turning. During turning, the materials are mixed, moving from the outside to the inside and from the upper layers to the lower layers. The heap is turned again after 3 weeks, when the stick feels cold then the process is complete, and the compost is ready for use. At this stage, the compost should have a fresh earthy smell and no manure, grass or leaves should be visible.