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Natural Organic Solutions

MAKING COMPOST - A NATURAL RECYCLING PROCESS

MAKING COMPOST - A natural recycling process

Gardeners often have difficulty disposing of their garden waste. In nature organic waste decomposes. Raw materials like leaves are transformed into nutrients for the plants and valuable humus for the soil. These by-products of the garden and home can be turned into compost with no more effort than it takes to put them into bags and have them removed.

THE ORGANIC CYCLE

From spring to autumn, nature is busy growing and producing. In autumn the leaves fall from the trees – all the ‘superfluous’ organic material falls to the ground. Nature does not let these valuable raw materials go to waste. Millions of insects and bacteria decompose these raw materials into humus, which in turn makes the plants grow and thrive through the next year.

WHAT HAPPENS WITH THERMO-COMPOSTING?

Thermo composting harnesses the heat of the sun and adapts it to accelerate the process of decomposing, therefore speeding the process up. Many different insects and organisms are present in the process of making compost - earthworms, centipedes, bacteria, fungi and many more. The bigger organisms break down the organic material and then the smaller ones decompose it further. The more organisms present, the quicker the rotting process. As organisms decompose the organic materials, their body heat causes the temperature in the pile to rise, at times reaching as high as 70°C in the Thermo Composter. At this time the pile will begin ‘settling’, which is a good sign that processes within the pile are working properly. The pH of the pile will be very acidic at first, at a level of 4.0 to 4.5. By the time the process is complete the pH should rise to about 7.0 to 7.2.

WHY MAKE COMPOST?

Saves at least 30% on garden water usage in peak watering times. The soil stays moist for longer. The temperature of the soil remains constant, to the advantage of the plants. Mulching prevents soil compaction, which aids root growth, and makes the soil easier to cultivate every year, as it is more fertile. Compost will save you buying fertiliser as the compost provides many of the necessary nutrients. Compost humus enriches the soil. You will also save money on refuse removal.

CONSTRUCTING THE PILE

Materials should be placed in layers. This ensures that the materials are added in the proper proportion. Activate the materials with ‘Radivit Universal Composter’ agent by sprinkling over each layer. See to it that the compost is always as damp as a wrung out sponge – not too dry and not too wet. If the compost is too dry add water. If it is too wet add some shredded newspaper. The compost should be well mixed after every 2-3 weeks. This ensures that the micro-organisms receive enough oxygen. In winter the decomposition process slows down. It is advisable to re-activate the compost in the spring by sprinkling ‘Radivit Universal Composter’ throughout the pile.

Mixed Garden Refuse

It is advisable to shred woody prunings before adding them to the pile. If the garden waste consists mainly of woody and dry components, add things like grass cuttings to add nutrients and moisture. If the waste consists of mostly moist components add shredded dry materials to balance it.

Since grass cuttings on their own are very damp, nitrogen rich and difficult to aerate, one should add shredded wood material to it in a 2:1 ratio. This would make the mixture looser and more permeable. One could however also add dry leaves or sawdust or shredded newspaper to the grass cuttings.

Organic Kitchen Waste

Only use non-fatty kitchen waste.

Establish a 10cm layer of garden waste, grass cuttings or shredded newspaper between the layers of kitchen refuse, to minimise dampness (excretions from this waste). Shredded newspaper is very useful as a loosening agent and also aids with absorption of juices.

THE LENGTH OF TIME NECESSARY FOR THE COMPOSTING PROCESS DEPENDS ON THE CARBON-TO-NITROGEN RATIO, SURFACE AREA PARTICLES, AERATION, MOISTURE AND TEMPERATURE.

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Co. Reg. # 99/1571407