



The Whole Works 2025

Annual Report to the Emmet County Board of Commissioners
from the Emmet County DPW Board & Staff



New Leadership



Jayna Steffel serves as the Waste Management and Recycling Director for Emmet County DPW. She oversees the operations of solid waste, recycling and composting programs and can be found at the Pleasantview Drop Off Center in Harbor Springs. Jayna has thirteen years of experience in public sector waste and recycling services, which most recently includes her role as the superintendent beginning 2022.

"2025 has been our busiest year to date with the number of customers through the facility and we found ourselves challenged by our resource constraints – so this has required flexibility, communication and cross training." Jayna is looking forward to the 2026 traffic flow study that will create a safer, more efficient facility and allow for infrastructure improvements as we continue to conduct Materials Management Planning.

Ashley McMurry acts as the Deputy Director of Emmet County Recycling and supports the planning, management, and oversight of the DPW operations and programs and headquarters at our downtown Petoskey office. Ashley has more than a decade of experience in conservation, public service, and program management. She previously served as Grants & Resources Coordinator for Emmet County Recycling, Program Coordinator with Emmet County Parks and Recreation, and as Program Manager and Policy Assistant at Michigan United Conservation Clubs. She is also active on multiple regional and state committees advancing recycling, circular economy initiatives, and civic engagement – including the LLT Class of 2026.

Ashley noted she is looking forward to deepening regional collaboration, strengthening education and outreach efforts that help residents and businesses better understand their role in the materials management system. "2026 will be the year of thoughtful groundwork turning into visible, impactful progress for our community."



Welcome Natalie!

Natalie joined our team as an intern May 19, 2025 and quickly made her mark with a can-do attitude and willingness to jump into anything. It wasn't long before she transitioned into a full-time role, where she now keeps a wide range of efforts running smoothly, from managing special projects and coordinating event recycling to overseeing shredding services, tote deliveries, and battery collection.

A University of Michigan graduate, Natalie brings both thoughtfulness and energy to her work each day. Her reliability, positivity, and team-first mindset have made her a joy to work with and a truly invaluable part of our team.

We know how to have fun, too.

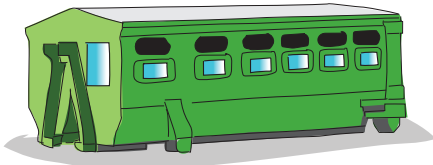


Recycled Materials Data

Dropsite Recycling

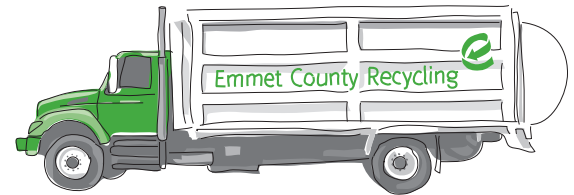
1. Mackinaw City	5,692 Yds
2. Cross Village	2,552 Yds
3. State Road [Readmond Township]	1,180 Yds
4. Pellston	5,476 Yds
5. Robinson Road	2,381 Yds
6. Harbor Springs Area	11,858 Yds
7. Alanson	8,546 Yds
8. Toski Sands	2,683 Yds
9. D&W	10,094 Yds
10. Bear Creek Crossings	17,733 Yds
11. Springvale Township	4,893 Yds
12. Pleasantview Drop Off Center	11,495 Yds

TOTAL YARDS 84,588 Yds
Down 3% from 2024 (87,375 Yards)



Curbside Recycling

1. Resort Township	27,786
2. Alanson	2,472
3. Little Traverse Township	19,658
4. Harbor Springs	15,098
5. Petoskey	47,032
6. Bay Harbor	4,540
7. Bay View	2,476
8. Bear Creek Township	29,417



148,479

Curbside Pick Ups 2025

Down 6.5% from 2024 (158,918)



Paper

1,227 tons



Boxes

2,797 tons



Bags

104 tons

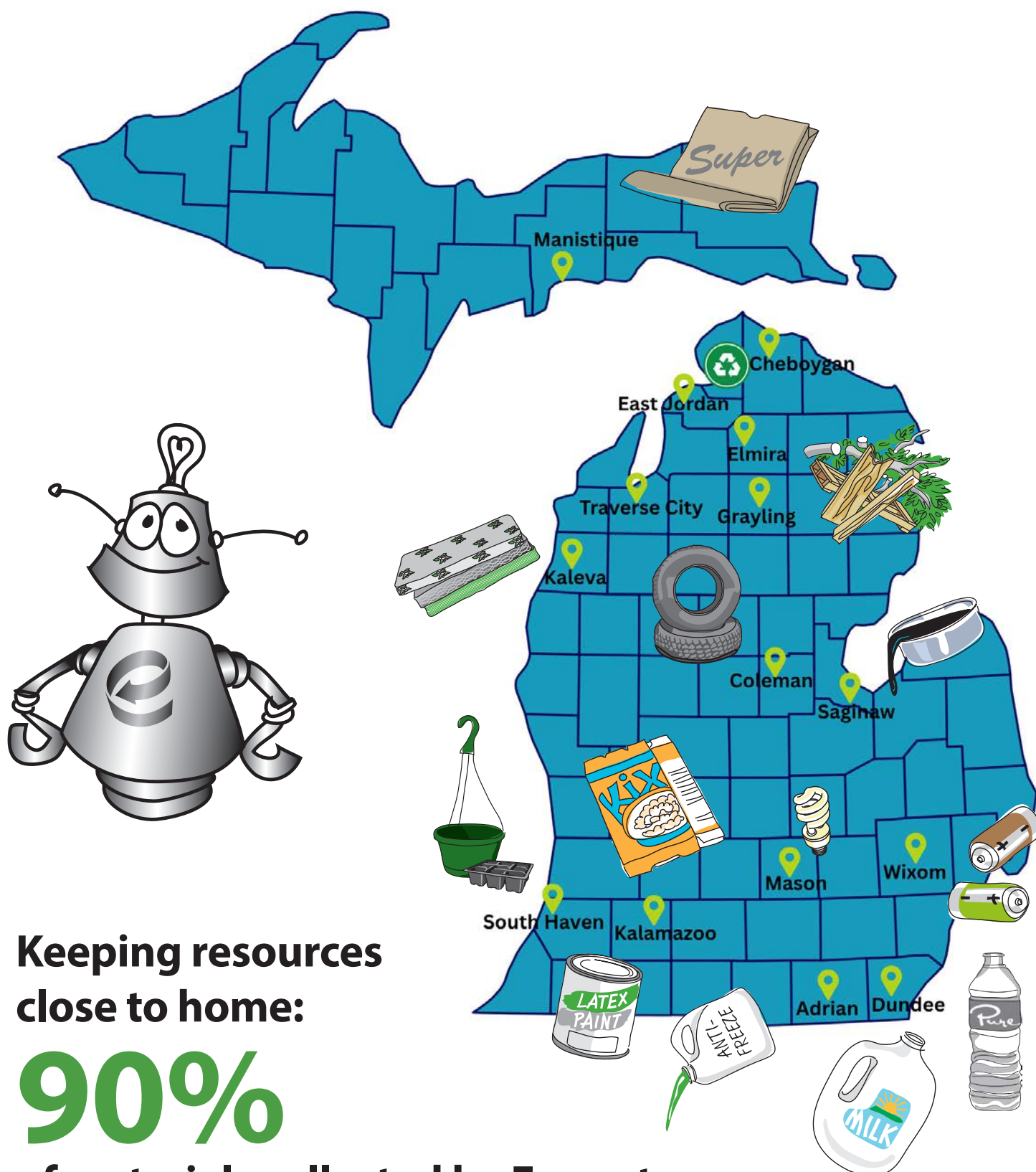
Mixed Containers

1,614 tons



Daily Recyclables	2025	2024	2023	2022
Paper, Boxes, Bags	4,128	3,851	4,185	4,380
Mixed Containers	1,614	1,467	1,684	1,378
TOTAL TONS	5,742	5,318	5,869	5,758

Supplying Michigan Businesses



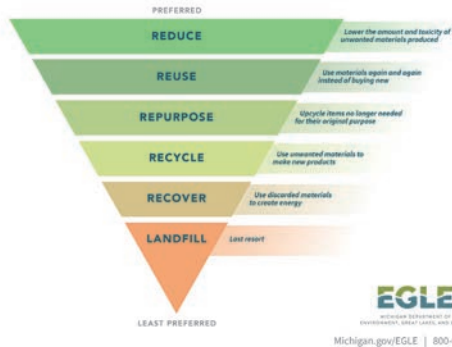
Keeping resources
close to home:

90%

of materials collected by Emmet
County Recycling stay in Michigan.

Priscilla Meyer

SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS MANAGEMENT



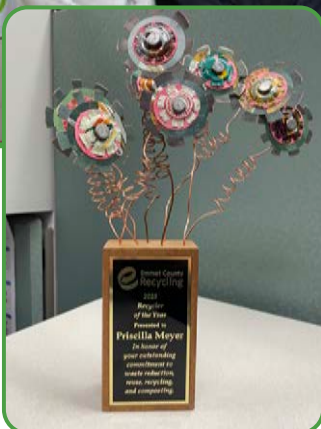
Each year, Emmet County honors an individual or business that goes above and beyond to reduce waste, recycle right, and inspire others to do the same. This year, we are proud to recognize Priscilla Meyer—a true recycling NINJA.

Priscilla is a steadfast drop site user who doesn't just participate—she takes ownership. She reports issues, tidies up when needed, and helps keep the system running smoothly for everyone. Her curiosity shines through in her favorite question, "Can I recycle this?"—a simple phrase that reflects her commitment to getting it right and helping others learn along the way.

In her workplace, Priscilla champions reuse, finding new life for items during office cleanouts. She composts daily coffee grounds and filters, instituted recycling at her church, dutifully cleans up her adopted highway each year and spreads joy through her work with "Flowers for Friends," creatively reusing arrangements from Sky's the Limit to maximize happiness per stem.

Her dedication doesn't stop there—she diligently collects coffee cans for battery recycling kits and recently completed the Master Recycler course (though many would say she could have taught it!) and was the first in the class of 25 to complete her ten hours of volunteer time.

Priscilla embodies the spirit of waste reduction, reuse, and community. Emmet County Recycling is proud to celebrate her as our 2025 Recycler of the Year.



Award materials included recycled paper, bottle caps, paper from an old calendar, copper flashing from a roof restoration, found bolts, wire I had, and the wood from my dad's stash.

Thanks for the honor of creating it for a worthwhile recipient!

-Jen Buchanan

Recycler of the Year 2025

Priscilla Meyer has long been an unsung hero so it is my honor to have this opportunity to sing her praises.

When the twelve Girl Scouts of Troop 379 aimed to create Flowers for Friends as their Gold Award project, Priscilla was on their Gold Award Committee. In the midst of opposition from other committee members, Priscilla advocated for the girls to move the project forward. And, they did.

When troop members left for college in 2009, they had recycled flowers from weddings, funerals and other events into 7,500 arrangements delivered to community members in need of a smile at areawide non-profits. Since that time, a group of women volunteers in the community took over the project largely led by Priscilla.

Priscilla's commitment to the project, her work ethic and endless hours working flowers to deliver smiles has been remarkable and, as of December 2025, led to the delivery of more than 75,000 arrangements of gently used flowers that would otherwise have been in the trash.

There is NO ONE more deserving of recognition as Emmet County Recycler of the Year.

As to Flowers for Friends, Priscilla has been Recycler of the Year for the last 16 years and a champion for isolated community members who were delivered joy due to her efforts.

Congratulations, Priscilla, on your well-earned recognition as Emmet County Recycler of the Year.

Sincerely, Tina DeMoore

Priscilla Meyer has been involved in the Flower for Friends Program since the beginning, by speaking up to the Girl Scout Council when the troop presented their Gold Award project. The idea was to take flowers from events and funerals and repurpose them into smaller arrangements and deliver them back out into the community.

We have delivered over 75,000 since the beginning of the program. When the girls graduated, Priscilla has been a constant in keeping the program going, by volunteering many hours to repurposing the flowers and she even brings the flowers from her church every week. She came in at the beginning of covid outbreak and during the ice storm last year, to help us repurpose the flowers that we had left over at the flower shop and helped us get them out to warming stations in Pellston.

She is a shining example of recycling spirit, even riding her bike to and from work when the weather permits. When we are repurposing the flowers, flowers that are not of best quality, get composted.

Priscilla reminds me of the Energizer Bunny, always moving.... Doing something for other people. So excited she is receiving this award, which she is so deserving.

-Jackie Burrell at Flowers from Sky's the Limit- Flowers for Friends program



Financials

2025 REVENUES

RECYCLING PROGRAMS

Sale of Materials	\$630,124.88
Curbside Recycling.....	\$565,983.92
Out-of-County Fees.....	\$682,538.55
Drop-off Center For-Fee Recycling.....	\$263,553.20
Compost, Mulch, & Bin Sales	\$27,125.77
From Waste Tip Revenues	\$563,433.99
County General Fund.....	\$0.00
Other Income	\$32,210.70
Grants	\$10,963.81
Write offs/Collections.....	(\$1,780.41)
Subtotal	\$2,510,601.21

WASTE TRANSFER STATION

Charges for Services.....	\$3,755,032.03
County General Fund.....	\$0.00
Interest Income	\$86,422.43
HHW Grants	\$6,681.00
Other Income*.....	\$73,976.84
Subtotal	\$3,922,112.30

TOTAL DPW REVENUE.....\$6,432,713.51

2025 EXPENSES

RECYCLING PROGRAMS

Personnel	\$1,502,542.58
Contractual Services	\$156,384.07
Operations	\$765,450.41
Depreciation	\$492,737.81
Subtotal	\$2,917,114.87

WASTE TRANSFER STATION

Personnel	\$670,044.72
Contractual Services	\$455,461.77
Landfill Fees.....	\$1,932,638.97
Operations	\$189,007.74
Depreciation	\$176,316.00
Subtotal	\$3,423,469.20

TOTAL DPW EXPENSES\$6,340,584.07

NOTES

*Transfer Station "Other Income" includes monies from business users of the Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) program, Insurance Recoveries and HHW Donations.

Waste Transfer Station Stats

VOLUME (Yards): 144,902

7.35% increase from 2024



CUSTOMERS: 84,435

7% increase from 2024



Construction

Transfer Station infrastructure improvements included snorkeling and cleaning of both compactors, replacement of the 30-year-old compactor #1, trench drain repairs, and asphalt paving throughout the facility.

Despite temporary delays caused by operating with a single compactor during construction, these capital upgrades were critical investments in maintaining safe, efficient, and reliable operations for residents and businesses using the facility.

Hazardous Waste

HHW Events

Wednesday, June 18

173 residential appointments
7 business appointments

Saturday, September 27

211 residential appointments
8 business appointments

**Total Hazardous Waste Collected:
40,200 lbs**



These events provide residents with a safe and responsible way to dispose of hazardous materials, preventing environmental harm and ensuring proper waste management.



Daily Collection

In addition to special collection events, ECR accepts hazardous materials on a daily basis for recycling:



Electronics
121,160 lbs

*Reuse, recover and recycle components
Dynamic Lifecycle Innovations of Onalaska, WI*



Latex Paint
47,820 lbs

New paint sold in Habitat for Humanity ReStores at ePaint Recycling of Battle Creek, MI



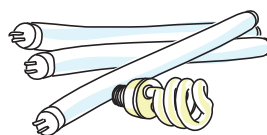
Motor Oil
22,649 lbs

*Re-refined motor oil
Heritage-Crystal Clean Saginaw, MI*



Batteries
18,800 lbs

*New batteries, stainless steel, supplements, fertilizers
Call2Recycle*



Lightbulbs
13,520 lbs

*New bulbs, thermostats, concrete or ceramic tile
Cleanlites of Lansing, MI*



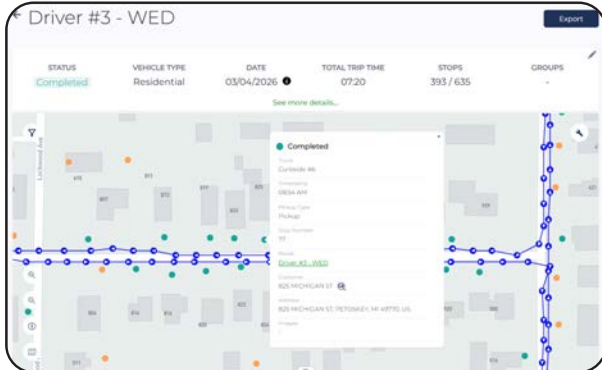
Antifreeze
5,902 lbs

*New antifreeze
Heritage-Crystal Clean Saginaw, MI*

Newsworthy

Curbside Recycling Routing Software

Implementation of the new Smart City Routeware software modernized curbside recycling operations by replacing spreadsheet-based routing with a digital system that can sequence and balance collection routes more efficiently.



The software helps reduce miles traveled, lower fuel consumption, and keep crews on schedule through real-time vehicle tracking and a visual dispatch board.

Additional features, including photo documentation capabilities, improve communication, accountability, and operational recordkeeping while creating greater overall efficiency for daily collection operations.

Groundwork celebrates Women's History Month

Petoskey's Lindsey Walker reflects on woman leadership



Scan QR code to read the article.

Growing a Greener Sullivan

How a small Michigan county's composting success can inspire our community.

Scan QR Code for full story.



Materials Management Planning (MMP)

The Emmet County Materials Management Planning Committee (MMPC) meets monthly to discuss management of materials like food waste, yard clippings, recyclables, and solid waste with a focus on sustainable practices such as recycling and composting.

Each meeting focuses on a different management strategy and includes presentations from programs around the state and country. Examples of current draft recycling goals:

- Increase commercial cardboard recycling by expanding convenient drop off and collection strategies
- Extend multifamily recycling services in existing curbside communities
- Develop ordinance or update planning & zoning requirements for new site developments to include space for multifamily recycling
- Expand residential curbside recycling service across the county
- Establish three additional drop off sites across the county
- Upgrade processing facilities to meet the increase in material volumes and material types based on the new goals

All meetings are open to the public and we encourage you to get involved – whether attending a meeting, reading the newsletter, perusing minutes of past meetings or filling out a brief survey. Let your voice be heard and help shape a new, data-driven Materials Management Plan for Emmet County.

Visit <https://www.emmetrecycling.org/about-us/materials-management-planning> or scan the QR Code for more information.



Storm of the Century

The March 28-30 ice storm raged for 60 hours, damaging an estimated 3 million trees in Emmet County. The Transfer Station was without power for three days and could offer only limited operations the remainder of the week for recycling and waste disposal.

Free wood debris was offered at the Pleasantview Drop Off Center April 3-5, prior to public sites opening. We collected 862 yards in three days – that's what we would normally collect over a period of four months!



Following the closure of the free, public sites, Emmet County opted for free ice storm tree debris for residences until July 1, then extended until July 31. During this time, we captured an additional 2,962 yards of tree debris. Comparing year to year, we took 4,332.25 cubic yards of additional brush in 2025!

Our program generally grinds this material every other year, due to the fees associated with mobilizing this specialized equipment and volume of brush.

A big **THANK YOU** Petoskey Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation for awarding an Emergency



Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area
community foundation

Response Fund grant to cover the astronomical amount of tree debris generated in our area.





Give all food a future 10 Year Anniversary

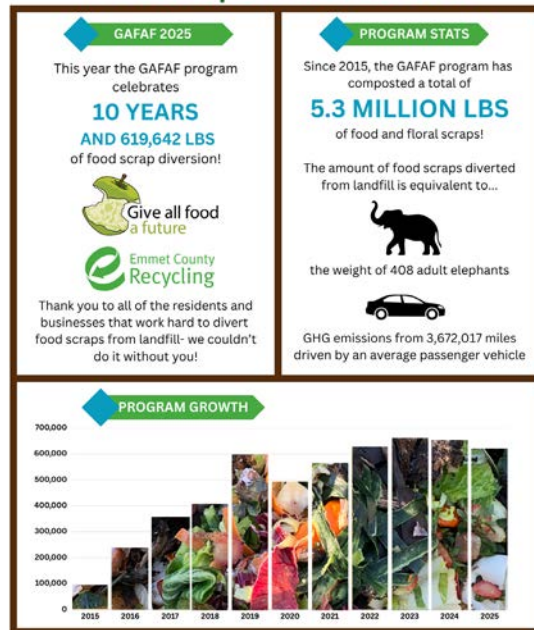
Over the past decade, ECR has collected a total of **5.3 million pounds** of food scraps- that's equivalent to the weight of approximately 408 adult elephants!

The collected food, floral, and yard debris is composted to create a nutrient dense soil amendment that individuals can add to their gardens and is available for purchase at the Pleasantview Drop Off Center -- by the bag, bucket or cubic yard. Best compost deal in town!

Diverting food scraps from the landfill truly is the lowest hanging fruit (pun intended!) in the pursuit of creating a greener and cleaner community for our friends and family here in Emmet County.

If you are interested in composting with us, there are four convenient locations in Petoskey and Harbor Springs!

Give All Food A Future Food Scraps Collection 2025



Composting at Home QUICK START GUIDE

Choose a spot.
Criteria: easy access all year round & free of standing water

Buy or build a container.

...with an open bottom.
A loose pile will work fine too.

Stock up on browns.

Browns are dry plant materials. To compost year round, you will need to gather a volume of browns roughly the size of your bin or the pile you envision. If using dry leaves this volume assumes you pack them down.

Browns [Carbon]:

- Dry leaves
- Wood chips
- Shredded paper
- Paper towel/toilet paper tubes
- Straw or hay
- Cardboard
- Paper bags
- Sawdust



Layer greens with browns.



Now you are ready to start composting! As you have kitchen scraps and fresh yard waste, put them on your pile and cover them with browns.

Greens [Nitrogen]:

- Fruit & vegetable scraps
- Eggshells
- Plant scraps
- Grass clippings
- Coffee grounds
- Flowers
- Tea bags

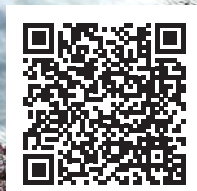


Recipe: 3 parts carbon: one part nitrogen

Layers should be 4 inches deep or less.

Just as important: Air & Water

- Utilize bulking agents (wood chips, pits, etc.)
- Turn the pile with a pitchfork
- Pile should be as moist as a wrung out sponge
- Food scraps
- Watering can or hose



Scan for
Drop Off
Locations



Ready to start composting at home? Check out our newly refreshed quick start guide! Scan QR code for a print friendly option.

