



Composting

Compost can be made from cuttings of healthy vegetation, straw, potato peelings, leaves, young weeds (without seeds), grass, food scraps, natural fertilisers, peat, animal waste, and wood or peat soot. The quality of the compost depends not only on the type, proportions and quality of the raw materials, but also on how they are processed.

Composting organic waste in an open rectangular frame is the simplest and most efficient method. You can construct a suitable container using planks, netting, bricks or other environmentally friendly materials, but you must remember to provide sufficient ventilation.

The composting container should be located in a dry, shady place. It should be 1 to 1.5 metres wide and as long as required. After removing the upper layer of the soil (to a depth of about 20 centimetres), the ground below the frame, which will form the floor of the container, should be matted down and covered with 20 centimetres of peat, which will retain the nutrients from the compost. The materials for composting can then be added in layers, 20 centimetres thick, with a layer of soil between each. When the compost heap reaches 1 to 1.5 metres in height, it should be covered with 10 centimetres of soil. A channel should then be made along the top of the compost heap and regularly filled with water to ensure the necessary amount of moisture for the steady decomposition of the materials. The compost should be turned several times a year, ideally every two months. After mixing, the upper and lower layers will become the middle layer. Following the last turning in autumn, the compost heap should be covered with leaves or straw to protect it from freezing. The resulting humus will be ready to use after a year.

Compost can also be made in closed containers, which make use of the natural heat discharged during the fermenting of the compost. Waste composted using this method ripens considerably faster. "Ripe" compost is a homogeneous mass. This fertiliser acts faster than natural humus and its contents are absorbed more easily by plants. It should be spread in the autumn or spring at a rate of 20 to 40 kilograms per square metre.

