

A close-up photograph of a dark, rich, organic soil. The soil is dark brown to black, with visible organic matter like small twigs and leaf fragments. A single earthworm is visible on the right side of the frame, curving upwards. The word "Organic" is overlaid in the center in a large, white, sans-serif font with a thin red outline.

Organic



• COMPOST •

WHAT IS IT?

IT'S THE ORGANIC MATTER IN A MORE OR LESS ADVANCED STATE OF DECOMPOSITION.
IT IS A NUTRIENT FOR THE SOIL THAT HELPS TO IMPROVE ITS QUALITY, AND FAVORS THE ABSORPTION OF WATER AND NUTRIENTS BY THE PLANTS.

DOES IT CONTAIN IT?

YES

Kitchen paper and paper napkins · Eggshells · Remains of fruit and vegetables
Dried fruits · Dry Bread and leftover cooked food · Dregs of coffee and remains of brews, Flowers, faded branches and green or dry leaves · Corrugated cardboard of egg cut into pieces · Sawdust of natural wood
· Lawn and other herbaceous · Remains of pruning crushed · Crushed Branches · Manure

NO

Sawdust of treated woods or agglomerates · Inorganic and not biodegradable Residues
Special residues (toxic) · Remains of meat and fish · Bones, thorns and remains of shellfish

TOOLS

A shovel to stir and to extract the compost made; pruning scissors to cut branches; gloves
watering-can and a push-cart or basket to transport the compost.

THINGS TO BEAR IN MIND

The matter decomposes because of the action of the microorganisms (bacteria and fungi). For these to live a series of requirements must be met:

TEMPERATURE. Between 35-55 °C to obtain the elimination of pathogenic, parasites and weeds seeds.

HUMIDITY. Between 40-60 %.

OXYGEN. Fundamental, consistently the compost must be rolled over frequently.

RELATION C/N (Carbon / nitrogen). A relation between C/N of 25-35 is the suitable one. The organic materials that are rich in carbon are: straw, dry hay, leaves, branches, rabble and sawdust. The ones that are rich in nitrogen are: young vegetables, animal excretions.

All these characteristics may change depending on the raw materials used

HOW DO YOU MAKE IT?

Place the residues in layers, so as to obtain a suitable heap.

Layer 1: Twigs or pieces of wood
Layer 2: Food residues
Layer 3: dry crushed leaves.
Layer 4: Residues of the pruning of lawn or plants.
Layer 5: Earth or cured compost

It is necessary to moisten every layer and later keep the moisture until the end of the process. The heap must be kept in rest between 4 and 8 weeks and later "rolled over" every 15 days.

A good emplacement for the heap of compost is heavily dependent on the climate.
In regions with a humid climate it is advisable to place it to the Sun and sheltered by the wind, protecting it from the rain. In warm zones it is better to place it to the shade during the summer.

SOME CONSIDERATIONS

- 40 % of the organic residues are usable raw material for the compost.
- It reduces the consumption of artificial manures.
- It can be made at home.
- It produces an organic fertilizer for the gardener or horticulturist.
- It preserves the humidity of the land.
- It reduces the water consumption between 30 % and 70 %.
- It diminishes the withdrawal and transport of tons of organic matter.
- It does not need energy to work
- It does not have maintenance costs.

INTERACTIVE QUESTIONS

- Name two components that may be used to obtain compost and two that cannot.
 - Why do you think that thorns and bones cannot be used to make compost?
- Do you think the volume of your garbage would diminish if you separated the organic matter to make compost? In what proportion?
- Do you think that the economic saving would be considerable if artificial manure was replaced by compost in homes? And in a garden?
- Do you think that the residuals of pruning and manure might be sufficient to autosupply a small agricultural garden? And a big one?