

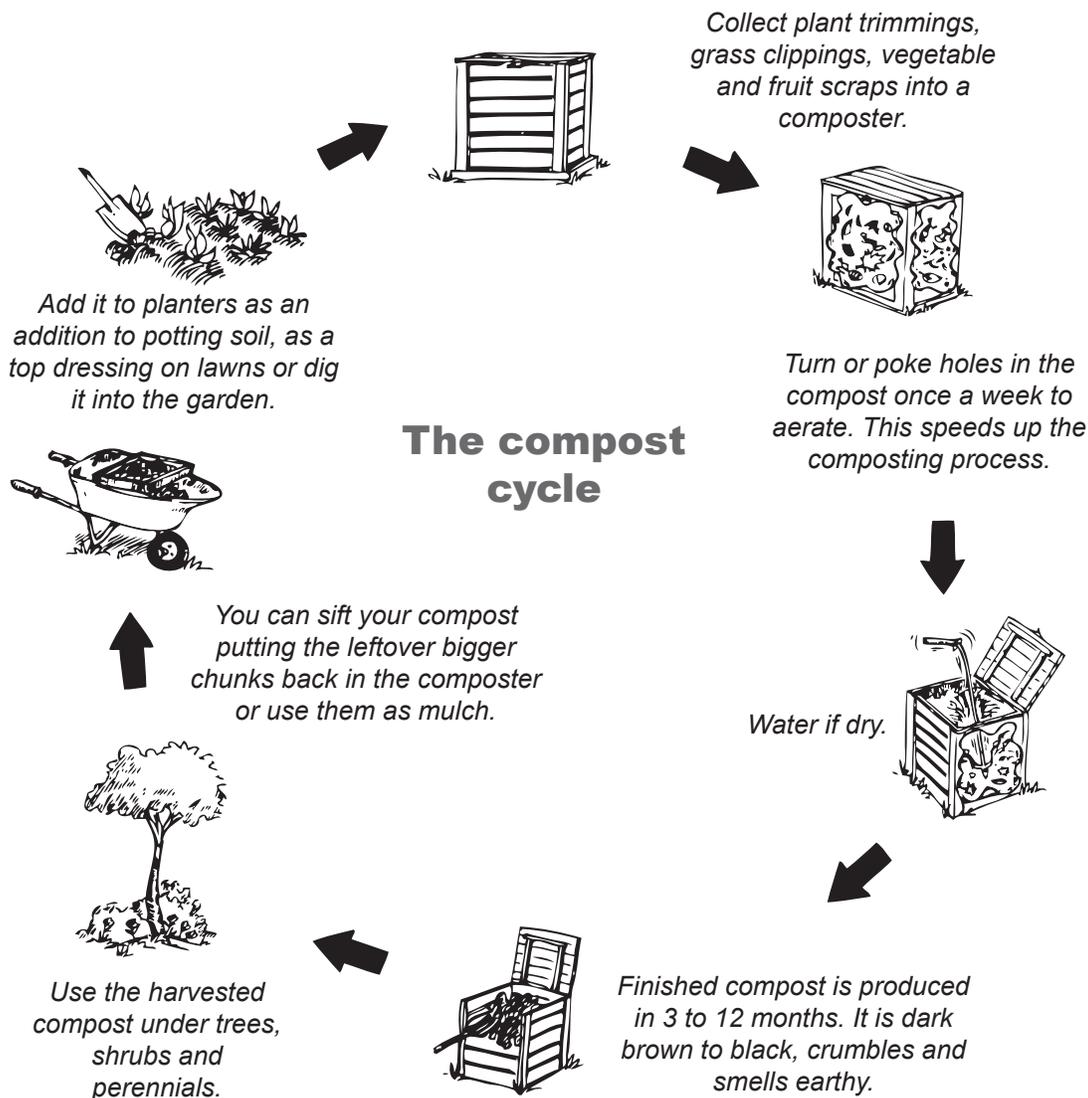
Recycling in Yukon

Composting

Composting is a natural process of decay that results in a nutrient-rich soil conditioner called compost. Many living organisms, such as bacteria, fungi, worms and beetles help break down organic material. Organic material includes anything that is or was living. Examples are food wastes such as vegetable peelings and tea bags, yard wastes such as leaves, grass and plant trimmings; and small cut-up branches and twigs.

WHERE CAN YOU COMPOST?

You can compost in your backyard. Build your own compost bin or purchase a bin. The City of Whitehorse offers a rodent resistant bin to all residents on a waste pick up route. Compost may also be dropped off at the City of Whitehorse Landfill during regular operating hours. Composting in communities varies by community – speak to your local municipality for more information.



**ZERO
WASTE**
STARTS NOW

QUICK FACTS

Over 5000 Whitehorse residences receive compost bin collection twice a month.

17% of waste in our landfill is compostable. This is the largest divertible material being thrown away.

45% of all household waste is compostable.

Temperatures of 65°C can be reached in a compost pile under the correct conditions.

Yukon Winters don't stop compost from happening. When the piles are frozen on the outside, they continue to generate a great amount of heat on the inside.

One application of compost can have a positive effect on plant growth for up to 8 years.

3 major types of bacteria work in a compost bin, each active at a different temperature range.

WHAT MATERIALS CAN BE COMPOSTED?

Was it once living? If so, it can be composted. (*exceptions: clippings treated with pesticides, feces, BBQ ashes or coal*)

Green Materials

(Nitrogen-rich)

- vegetables and fruits
- coffee grounds
- tea leaves/bags
- fresh grass clippings
- green plant trimmings

Brown Materials

(Carbon-rich)

- straw
- sawdust, wood shavings
- dry leaves
- shredded newspaper

HOW LONG DOES THE PROCESS TAKE?

It takes 3 to 12 months to produce compost. It depends on a number of factors, including:

- Temperature
- moisture
- material size – surface area
- oxygen
- carbon-to-nitrogen ratio
- degree of turning/mixing involved

The more actively these are managed, the faster the process.

HOW DO YOU GET GREAT COMPOSTING RESULTS?

- chop up large material - thumb size is best
- add equal amounts of carbon-rich and nitrogen-rich materials
- add grass clippings in thin layers (5 cm thick)
- keep composting material wet but not too wet. It should feel moist like a wrung-out sponge
- Add air (aerate) once a week by turning or poking holes in decomposing material

WHEN SHOULD COMPOST BE HARVESTED?

Compost can be harvested and applied to gardens throughout the year. However, early spring is the best time to use it because the nutrients are available to the plants over a longer period of time. If compost is applied in the winter, the rain can wash the nutrients away.

WHAT IS THE VALUE OF COMPOST?

- It creates spaces for air and water, allowing for good root penetration. The result is healthy plants.
- It holds moisture in the soil.
- Compost releases nutrients slowly. It provides important macronutrients (nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium) and micronutrients (calcium, magnesium and boron).
- It buffers the soil and makes soil nutrients available over a wider range of acidities, enabling a greater variety of plants to grow.
- It can control some soil-borne diseases and prevent soil erosion.

updated December 2013

ZEROWASTE STARTS NOW

- **BUILD YOUR BIN** with reused materials.
- **SAVE YOUR LEAVES** for summer composting.
- **MOW OVER LEAVES** or use a weed trimmer in a garbage can to chop them up help them compost more quickly.
- **ADD FOOD WASTE** deeper into the compost pile.
- **MULCH** – Place a 5 cm layer of grass clippings, leaves or chipped yard waste on the ground to insulate the soil from heat and cold. Mulching also keeps the soil moist and allows you to water less often. As the mulch decomposes, it will slowly release nutrients to the soil.
- **TOP-DRESS** - Add compost around the bottom of plants without disturbing the root system. Leave the plant stem free for air to circulate.
- **MAKE POTTING SOIL MIX** - for containers or baskets. *Generic recipe:* 1/3 perlite, 1/3 soil and 1/3 sifted compost.
- **NOURISH PLANTS WITH COMPOST TEA** – Fill an old tea towel with compost and knot the towel. Soak the bag overnight in a garbage can of water. Water your plants with the resulting nutrient-rich compost tea.
- **COLLECT FOOD SCRAPS IN THE FREEZER** – No smell. No flies.



COMPOSTING QUESTIONS?

Call the City of Whitehorse Environmental Coordinator: 867-668-8312

zerowasteyukon.ca