

Organic Waste Management: Composting

Knowledge Check **KEY**

In the GB Learning Library - Core Preparation Sessions
this is Section 5.1 in Module 5: Management Strategies

1. What is vermicomposting?

(From: <http://cwmi.css.cornell.edu/vermicompost.htm>)

Vermicomposting is the process of using worms and micro-organisms to turn kitchen waste into a black, earthy-smelling, nutrient-rich humus.

2. What is the correct ratio of "Browns" to "Greens" in an active compost container?

30:1 - 30 parts "browns" to 1 parts "greens" (From the *Composting at Home* presentation)

3. Name 4 "Browns":

Answers will vary:

Leaves

Pine needles

Paper

Peanut shells

Many others

(From the *Composting at Home* presentation)

4. Name 4 "Greens":

Answers will vary:

Vegetable waste

Coffee grounds

Grass clippings

Garden and lawn weeds

Many others

(From the *Composting at Home* presentation)

5. Name 3 organic waste items that should NOT go into a compost pile:

Answers will vary:

Dairy products

Grease and fats

Treated paper

(From the *Composting at Home* presentation)

6. Briefly describe a simple test to measure the maturity of a compost pile.

(From <http://csetompkins.org/gardening/composting/compost-resources> factsheet "Is It Done Yet?")

Jar test – Put material in jar, add water, seal and after a week check for odor; no odor = good

Germination test – Compare sprouting of seeds in compost "tea" compared to distilled water; significant delays or other difference indicate compost is not yet finished or mature.

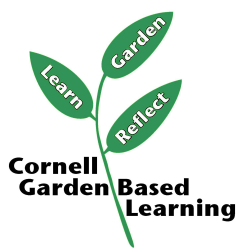
7. Why might animals be attracted to a compost pile? What is one possible strategy to minimize this issue?

Many animals would find good food in a compost pile especially if meat, fat, bones or other by products were being added instead of just plant waste or "browns."

Minimize unwanted pests by selecting a bin that can exclude pest and by choosing to limit organic material to appropriate "greens" and "browns." (From the *Composting at Home* presentation)

8. Why might a compost pile smell like rotten eggs? What can someone do to correct this issue?

Might not have enough oxygen (air) and or be too wet. Turn the pile and if it is too wet, add some dried materials like leaves or straw to soak up moisture. (From the *Composting at Home* presentation)



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