

Indoor Prep for better COMPOST

Composting is a **natural and powerful process**: food will break down without our help, but without our management it does so on its own timeline and may or may not produce odors.

If you want to capture every food scrap in your kitchen, make usable compost **faster**, and **minimize problems** here are four ways to up your composting game.

1 MAKE IT CONVENIENT AND OBVIOUS

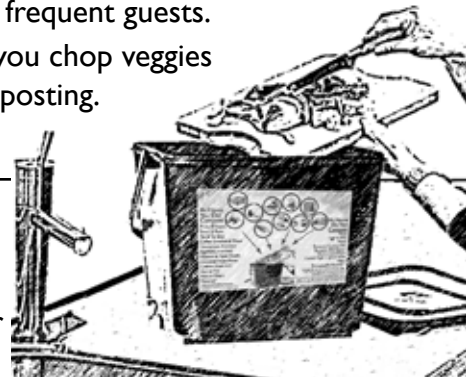
Choose a container that makes collecting food scraps easy for your household; an extra mixing bowl, a container salvaged from the recycling bin, a small bucket, or a purchased caddy all work well.



Choose a good size for your household: too big, and you may be tempted to let it sit longer and get smelly. Too small, and you will run out of room or will have to make more trips to your outdoor bin.

Label your compost container, especially if you share a kitchen or have frequent guests.

Keep it somewhere obvious – on the countertop next to where you chop veggies is an ideal spot that normalizes the act of collecting food scraps for composting.



2 MAKE IT CLEAN AND PLEASANT

Line the bottom of your container with something you want in your compost anyway – shredded cardboard or newspaper, leaves, or paper towels work well. They will absorb any liquids and keep the food from getting stuck to the sides or bottom of your container.

You may not want to seal the container! Without good air circulation, food scraps can generate unpleasant odors. Most commercial caddies have vent holes with a built-in charcoal filter. If you are using a DIY container, cover it loosely with newspaper or a kitchen towel to keep smells in and fruit flies out.

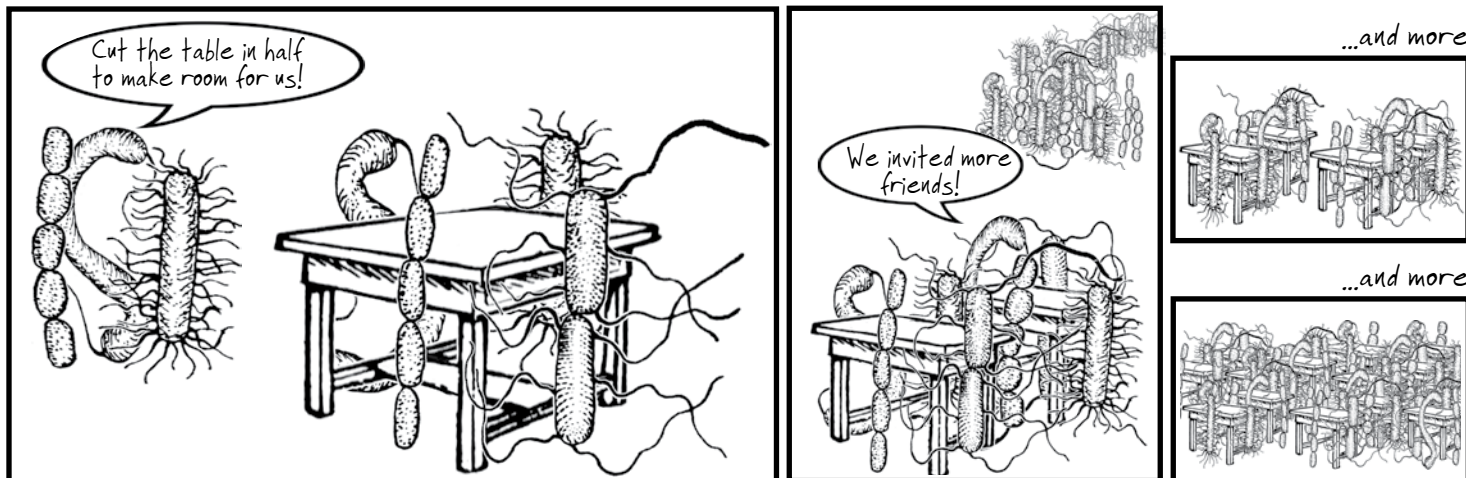
Nobody likes fruit flies. Tropical fruits are notorious for bringing fruit fly eggs into your kitchen. Freezing food scraps, frequently emptying, or keeping your scraps covered minimizes fruit flies.

Do not let your food scraps sit for too long. Even the best-kept food scrap container gets ripe after a few days. Empty it into your outdoor compost bin and cover well with a layer of “browns” (dried leaves, woodchips, straw, shredded paper, etc.) Wash the container, line the bottom, and return it to its spot!

3 MAKE IT SMALL

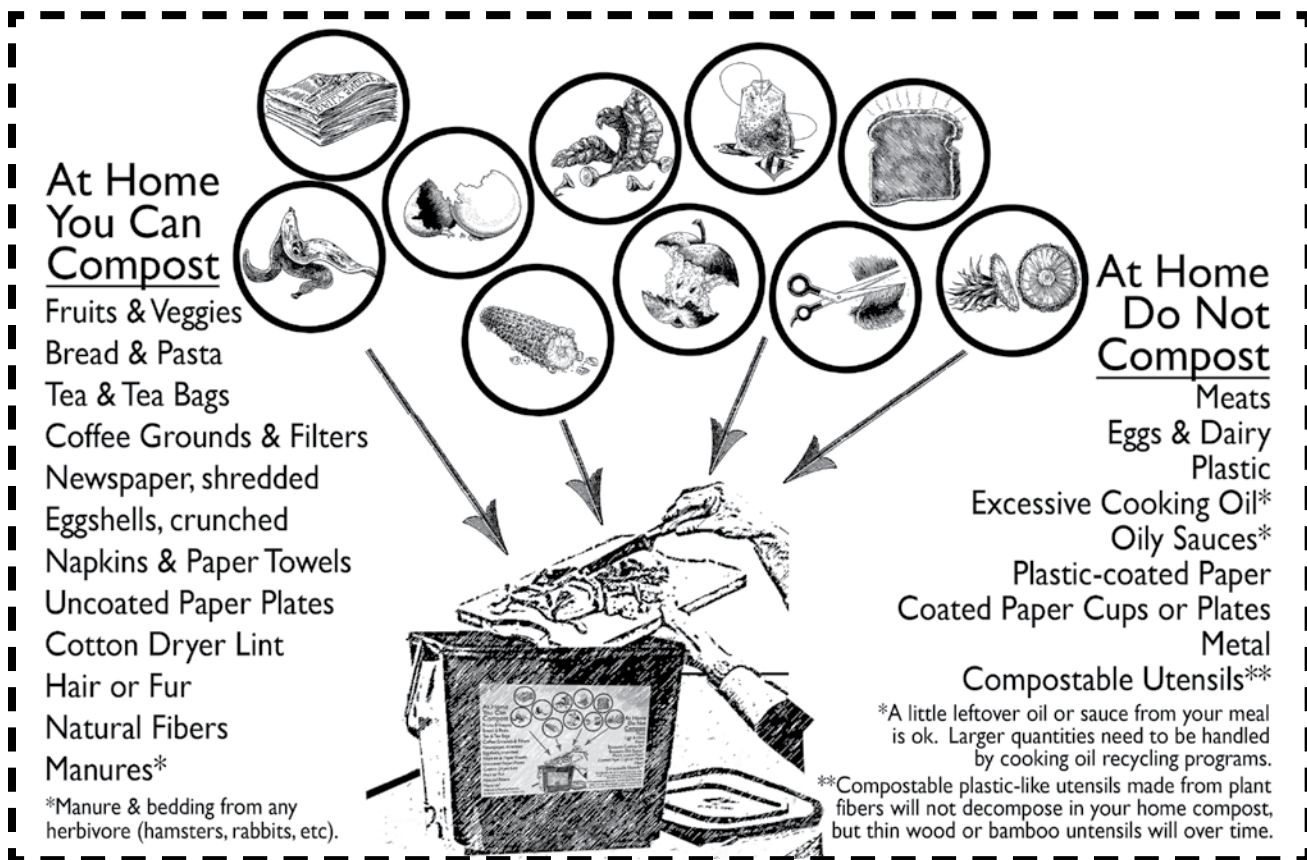
Size matters!

While you are prepping your food, take a moment to chop up the scraps into smaller bits, especially slow-to-breakdown items like corncobs, eggshells, and stalky items. The composting D.O.ers (Decomposing Organisms) are tiny bacteria. The more surface area they have, the more efficiently they will break down your food scraps. Each cut makes room for more!



4 MAKE IT EASY

Cut out this guide or fold this page and tape it to your collection container or stick it on your fridge so guests, roommates, or family members know what to do. Remember, except for eggshells and hair, your compost prefers a vegan diet.



LOVE
YOUR
COMPOST!

Master Composters of Tompkins County



RECYCLING AND
MATERIALS
MANAGEMENT
OF TOMPKINS COUNTY

Cooperative Extension
Tompkins County