

# COMPOST PERMIT

FEE: \$5.00

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Application is hereby made to construct and maintain a compost pile as stated below and in compliance with Section 375.01 of the Health Code of the Codified Ordinance of the City of Shaker Heights.

ISSUED TO: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE NO: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Above Application Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
Director of Public Service

## CONSTRUCTION:

1. This compost pile shall not be located within three feet (3') of property lines or other structures, or within six feet (6') of an inhabitable dwelling. The location shall be subject to the approval of the Director of Public Service.
2. Compost piles shall be built on level ground.
3. The compost pile container shall be free standing and constructed of wood, cinder block, wire mesh, snow fencing, pickets, hardware cloth, brick or similar material. Air circulation shall be allowed from all sides.
4. The dimensions of the compost pile container shall be roughly four feet by four feet (4' x 4') if built in a rectangle, or four and one-half feet (4-1/2') in diameter if built in a circle, and not lower than two and one-half feet (2-1/2') nor higher than five feet (5'). Prefabricated containers designed specifically for composting will be acceptable with smaller dimensions.

## MAINTENANCE:

1. The optimum pile would be: A layer of organic matter, a second layer of a different organic matter, a thin layer of soil, a sprinkling of lime or limestone, a source of nitrogen, then water, and then a repetition of the process. Organic matter includes grass, clippings, leaves, trimmings from bushes and flowers, but shall not include garbage or tree branches.
2. Lime or limestone shall be used in maintaining the pile. Agricultural lime or ground limestone is preferred.
3. Aeration shall be maintained by poking holes in the top or sides of the compost pile, and by turning the pile.

Effective April 1, 1994

## Backyard Composting

Composting transforms the natural nutrients of organic waste into a soil-like material called "compost," which can enrich the soil used for gardens, lawns, and house plants. Composting also reduces the amount of solid waste that goes into a landfill, and is part of the solution for solid-waste disposal problems.

Yard waste is a prime candidate for composting. On a nationwide basis, yard waste accounts for approximately 20% of the residential waste stream, totaling about 230 pounds per person per year in the United States (food wastes add another 100 pounds). Traditional yard waste disposal methods are environmentally unsound and are becoming increasingly expensive. Yard wastes in landfills can result in methane gas production, leaching of acidic liquid, and other problems. Incineration is a poor substitute for land-filling because burning yard wastes requires energy and creates pollution. Composting at home saves transportation and disposal costs, provides an environmentally sound way to manage wastes, and offers people an opportunity to contribute to and benefit from part of the solid-waste solution.

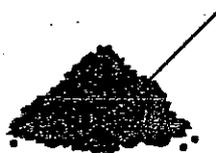
Backyard composting is simple and inexpensive. Although a compost pile can be created on the ground, it is neater and more efficient to build a container at least 3x3x3 feet, which is the smallest size considered effective. Approximately 11 feet of snow fence will make a container 3 feet in diameter by 4 feet tall. Compost bins are also commercially available, and can be purchased from Seventh Generation.

A key to effective composting is using a mixture of materials. Don't allow large amounts of one material to build up; no single layer of material should be greater than six inches thick. Items to compost include: yard waste such as weeds, grass clippings, leaves, and plant trimmings; kitchen waste such as coffee grounds, crushed eggshells, potato peelings, and vegetable waste; shredded newspapers. Do not compost: grass clippings or other vegetation treated with weed killers and insecticides if the compost will be used on food crops; vegetation affected by diseases and pests; animal bones, meat, or fish; dairy products; pet wastes.

Layer the mixture of materials until a height of 3 or 4 feet is reached. Sprinkle manure, a high-nitrogen fertilizer, or compost activator between layers. If the material is dry, it needs more fertilizer, rather than more green vegetation. Keep the pile covered and as moist as

a squeezed-out sponge. Occasional watering may be required if it becomes too dry.

As the organic material decomposes, the pile will give off heat. When this process is complete, the temperature will drop, and the materials will be dark brown and crumbly. A well-constructed pile will decompose in three to six months. For fast decomposing, turn the pile several times (turning the pile more than once a week will inhibit the process) or put materials through a shredder before composting.



## Composting Trouble-Shooting Guide

Symptom	Problem	Correction
pile smells like rotten eggs, rancid butter, vinegar	not enough air too much nitrogen	turn pile add bulking (*)
pile is wet to the touch	not enough air/too much water	turn pile and add bulking
pile doesn't heat	too small or too dry	enlarge or add water
pile is damp and smells sweet but won't heat	not enough nitrogen	add grass clippings or other nitrogen source
center is dry and contains tough materials	not enough water	add water and turn
pile attracts animals	meat, bones, or other animal products have been added	monitor what goes in pile - enclose pile in wire or add ammonia

(\*) bulking is dry organic material such as autumn leaves.