Bernalillo County Master Composters course

March 2011

Photos from the City of Albuquerque Open Space Center

By Jo McEntire

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Hot Compost Demonstration with John Zarola

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Bins for a hot compost process:
3 x 3 feet each, at least 3 feet high

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Option: Wire cage with plastic bags clipped inside
Wire cages to store seasonal brown materials
Start with a layer of **bulky plant materials** that break down slowly.

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Cage is not lined - for demonstration purposes.
More bulk: pine cones, cardboard tubes, egg cartons
Add more bulky browns to allow for air movement
John’s mixed recipe: crushed dry leaves, manure – about 30:1 by weight
Add water until wet but not soaked. Load mix on top of the bulky material.
Let the compost cook

- Add water and hold it in
  - Cover with tarp, old rug
- Add Air
  - Turn it every few days
- Hot composting process
  - Temperatures rise to 170 degrees
  - Temperatures then drop to 70-90 degrees

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Once compost cools: Finish it. Screen compost and remove large materials. Keep in container with air flow.
Finished? Earthy smell = humus! Turn into soil gently.