

Hot Composting: A Managed Method

1. **Construction:** Organic materials are saved up and the pile is built *all at one time*.
2. **Container:** A container is very useful and recommended for hot composting.
3. **Size:** Size can vary from 3'x3'x3' (minimum) to 5'x5'x5' (maximum).
4. **Location:** Should be convenient and close to a water source.
5. **Carbon (browns) : Nitrogen (greens) ratio:** About 25:1
6. **Moisture:** Ideally maintained at about 50%
7. **Aeration:** Good air flow, varied ingredient textures reduce pile compaction
8. **Ingredient size (feed stocks):** Small and varied sizes and textures
9. **Attention:** Regular turning/aeration and moisturizing of ingredients, +/- monthly
10. **Temperature:** The pile will heat up from microbial biological activity to 100–150 F. The minimum pile size will help insulate and retain heat in pile. After the pile becomes hot it is allowed to "cook" for about 2 weeks or until it cools down, then it is turned.
11. **Benefits:** The high heat helps destroy some pathogens and speeds the process.
12. **Microbial action:** Prolific. Bacteria predominate, then fungi and molds. Beneficial insects are involved throughout the aerobic composting process.
13. **Time to product:** Variable 4–12 months
14. **Product volume:** 1/2 to 1/3 of original pile size

Our website: nmcomposters.org