

The Good, the Bad & the Ugly of Composting

The Good,

Below is a description of the main **Green** and **Brown** materials that you **CAN** compost in typical a composter

Green	Brown
Grass cuttings	Leaves
Garden plants	Twigs
Weeds (dandelion, chicweed, clover, etc.)	Hedge prunings
Potted plants	Shredded tree trimmings
Cut flowers	Straw or hay
House plants	Pine needles, cones, bark
Vegetative kitchen scraps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Vegetable trimmings -Fruit peels -Cores and rinds -Tea bags -Coffee grounds and filters -baked goods including bread -rice and other grains -pasta and cereals -cooked or uncooked vegetables 	Non-recyclable paper: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -paper towels -paper napkins -uncoated paper plates and cups -soiled cardboard (like pizza boxes) <p>Must be torn up or shredded to be used effectively</p>
Vegetarian pet cage waste (hamsters, guinea pigs, rabbits)	Saw dust or wood shavings from untreated wood
Farm animal manure (horse, cow, sheep, pig, turkey, chicken)	Animal bedding (hay, sawdust, etc.)
	Wood chips from clean timber

Remember: always try to mix equal amounts of "green" and "brown" materials



The Bad,

Below is a description of things you shouldn't add to your typical holding bin composter

Items Unsuitable for Composting at Home	Why?
Diseased plants or leaves	Piles often do not get hot enough to destroy all plant diseases
Insect infested plants	Piles often do not get hot enough to destroy all eggs, larvae and adult insects
Invasive weeds: ivy, blackberry, morning glory, buttercup....those that spread by root or runner	Some will not decay in the composting process so they could survive and spread
Lumber or large woody materials	Too big to compost, must be shredded to be used
Any animal products or parts: meat, fish, poultry	Can cause odours and attract pests
Bones and shells	Most slow to compost, if at all. Insides can cause odours and attract pests
Dairy products, including cheese	Can cause odours and attract pests
Cooking oils, fat or grease	Can suffocate the composting organisms, cause odours and attract pests
Dead animals and guts	Can cause odours and attract pests
Vacuum cleaner bags	Not all bags and/or contents are biodegradable, especially homes with installed synthetic carpet
Textiles	Not all biodegradable. To compost 100% cotton, linen or wool items, cut up finely or shred
BBQ, peat, wood or coal ashes	Raises pH. Better to be spread on land or dispose
Nappies or sanitary napkins	Not fully biodegradable. May contain pathogens that could spread disease and cause odours
Dog and cat pet wastes	May contain pathogens that could spread disease, cause odours and attract pests (flies). Can be disposed of in digestion systems and used in non-food producing areas of the garden.
Chemicals and pharmaceuticals	Contaminates final compost product and soil

and the Ugly

When in doubt....throw it out!

