

# Seasonal Composting Guide

**Spring** To get things off to a good start, give the contents of your composter a good stir, and if necessary, blend in a few handfuls of leaves or woodchips to help absorb any excess moisture and to rebalance the Carbon/Nitrogen ratio of the material in the pile. Be sure to try to reach right down to the bottom and centre of the pile, to prevent any pockets of anaerobic activity from developing.

**Summer** Whenever you add a pail of fresh food waste be sure to top dress your pile with a thin layer of leaves or wood chips. Besides helping to maintain a good Carbon/Nitrogen ratio in your pile it also works to prevent odours, and discourage fruit flies. When the pile is dry, pour a pail or two of water directly into the centre of the pile, and then turn it to blend it in.

**Fall** This is the best time to do 'the bug harvest' of any finished compost. It's also a good time of year to apply compost to your gardens and lawn, and it frees up lots of space in your composter for kitchen organics you'll generate over the winter months. Once you've separated out the finished product, replace any unfinished material in the composter, placing a layer of woody, high carbon material on the bottom. Be sure to put aside a few extra bags of leaves to stack around your composter for insulation and to use as a source of carbon to blend with fresh food wastes you add to your pile throughout the winter.

**Winter** The whole composting process really slows down over the winter months, often completely freezing up, but that doesn't mean you have to stop adding fresh materials to your composting unit. If you stockpiled a few bags of leaves the previous Fall you can add some of these with each input of food scraps. If you're at all concerned that you're adding too many high nitrogen products and you've got the space, consider putting excess fruit and vegetable scraps in a plastic tub in the freezer and add them to your composter in the spring.