

Troubleshooting the Compost Process

SYMPTOM	PROBLEM	SOLUTION
The compost has a bad odor.	Not enough air.	Turn the pile, add more PVC pipes.
The compost has a bad odor and is soggy.	Not enough air and too wet.	Mix in dry ingredients like straw or shavings, add PVC pipes and cover with a tarp.
The inside of the pile is dry.	Not enough water.	Add water when turning the pile. Should be as damp as a wrung out sponge.
The compost is damp & warm in the middle, but nowhere else.	Pile is too small.	Collect more raw material and mix it into the old ingredients. Piles smaller than 3' square have trouble holding heat.
The pile is damp and smells fine, but is not heating up.	Too many shavings, wood chips or bedding (carbon source) and not enough manure (nitrogen source).	Mix in a nitrogen source -- straight manure, fresh grass clippings, blood meal or ammonium sulfate.