



COMPOST TROUBLESHOOTING GUIDE

PROBLEM	CAUSE	SOLUTION
Bad odor (rotten smell)	Too much moisture	Turn the compost or add dry, porous material like leaves, straw, shredded cardboard or newspaper
Bad odor (ammonia smell)	Too much nitrogen compared to carbon	Add high-carbon materials like straw, sawdust, wood chips
	Compacted leaves	Turn the compost or make the pile smaller
	Inadequate air	Turn the compost
Low compost temperature	Pile is too small	Increase size, insulate sides
	Too little moisture	Add water and turn the compost
	Too much moisture	Turn the compost and mix in dry, brown materials
	Too little air	Turn the compost
	Lack of nitrogen	Mix in nitrogen source (greens): grass clippings, or manure
	Cold weather	Increase pile size or insulate pile with a layer of straw or plastic
Pile is dry throughout	Not enough water; too much wood material	Turn pile and moisten material; add fresh green materials; cover pile
	Pile is too small	Collect more material and mix the old ingredients into a new pile
Pest infestation: dogs, rodents, insects	Improper food scraps added	Don't add meat, fats, bones or other animal products
	Food scraps not covered	Place fruit and vegetable scraps in the center of pile, cover with soil or compost
Neighbor complains	Compost pile is ugly	Construct covered bin system to keep it neat

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Composting Websites

Overall Composting

www.bouldercountyrecycles.org

Boulder County's website for waste reduction. Has links to all kinds of info about composting, including where to buy a bin, upcoming workshops, etc.

www.ecocycle.org

Has a step-by-step guide on how to get started composting. Boulder-based zero waste non-profit organization.

www.ext.colostate.edu

CSU Extension office website for Boulder County. Contains all types of resources, including fact sheets on soil, gardening, composting, etc.

www.compostguide.com

A complete guide to composting.

www.epa.gov/composting

EPA's website on composting.

www.planetnatural.com

A guide for the home gardener.

www.biocycle.net

Biocycle is the Journal of Composting & Organics Recycling...an industry standard.

www.gardeners.com

Great site to see all the different kinds of composting systems. Search for compost bins.

www.compostingcouncil.org

US Composting Council

Worm Composting

www.wormwoman.com

Website of Mary Appelhof, who wrote "Worms Eat My Garbage" Under construction. Check back for more.

www.redwormcomposting.com

Good overall about worm composting.

www.compost.css.cornell.edu/worms/basics.html

Good website about setting up a worm bin for a school group.