

# BUCHANAN'S

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# NATIVE PLANTS

## Composting Basics

### Materials to Compost

#### **Greens** (high in nitrogen)

- grass clippings
- prunings
- fruits and vegetables
- houseplants
- manure
- kitchen scraps: e.g., stale bread, egg shells, coffee grounds, tea bags, fruit and vegetable peels

#### **Browns** (high in carbon)

- leaves
- Pine needles
- bark
- straw
- woodchips
- brush (chopped)
- newspaper (shredded)
- corn stalks

#### **Do not Use**

- bones
- dog/cat feces
- oil, grease, fat
- wood ash
- meat /fish scraps
- dairy products
- weeds with seeds
- diseased plants

### Organisms Who do the Work

#### **Microbes**

- Bacteria
- Fungi
- Protozoa
- Nematodes

#### **Shredders**

- Worms
- Insects
- Springtails
- Other arthropods

### Water: The Squeeze Test

Take a handful of compost material and squeeze it as tightly as you can.

- If you cannot get one drop of moisture to squeeze out, it is too dry.
- If you get more than one or two drops, it is too wet.
- If you get one or two drops, it is the appropriate moisture level.

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### Air: Keep it Aerobic

- Turning your compost adds oxygen for the beneficial microbes and speeds up the composting.
- Structures should expose the compost to as much air (ventilation) as possible.
- If it stinks (anaerobic) turn it and/or add dry, brown material

### Final Product: Finished Compost

- Smells pleasant – like the soil on the forest floor
- Looks dark and crumbly with no recognizable starting materials
- Is moist but not wet

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **U.S. Composting Council Fact Sheet**

Great composting information is at:

[http://organiclifestyles.tamu.edu/compost/home\\_composting\\_faq.pdf](http://organiclifestyles.tamu.edu/compost/home_composting_faq.pdf)

Please check it out to get complete directions and tips on home composting.

### **Other Good Sites:**

<http://www.urbanharvest.org>

<http://www.carolinacompost.com/backyardcomposting>

<http://www.natureswayresources.com>

<http://www.thegroundup.com>

and, of course, <http://www.BuchanansPlants.com>