City of Chicago’s
Sustainable Backyard Program: COMPOST BINS

Also available: Rebates for Trees, Rain Barrels, and Native Plants

Why Compost at Home?
- Helps your garden and house plants grow by improving soil fertility.
- Saves you money by replacing store-bought soil conditioners.
- Saves water by helping the soil hold moisture and reduce runoff.
- Benefits the environment by recycling valuable organic resources, reducing air and water pollution from garbage trucks and runoff, and extending the life of our landfills.

Compost Works for You!
Composting helps the environment and it can help your garden, lawn and house plants too! When your compost looks like soil and smells sweet and earthy, it is ready to use. You can use it...
- In New Garden Beds: Mix a 4” to 8” layer of compost into newly reclaimed or poor soils.
- In Existing Beds: Mix a 1” to 3” layer of compost into annual garden beds at least once a year.
- On The Lawn: Spread a thin layer of mulch evenly across lawn as needed, instead of fertilizer.
- As a Mulch: Spread a 1” to 3” layer of course compost on soil as a mulch any time during the growing season to improve soil fertility and reduce watering needs. Do not pile mulch on the stems of plants or the trunk of trees.
- On House Plants: Sprinkle a thin layer of sifted compost on top of the soil to provide nutrients.

DID YOU KNOW: In a typical Chicago home, kitchen scraps account for nearly 20% of the garbage produced!

We can help!

Rebates
We want to give you 50% off (up to $50) any locally-purchased compost bin! All you have to do is fill out the attached rebate form and send it in with your original purchase receipt. See rebate form (attached) for more details.

Workshops
Attend a free Sustainable Backyard Workshop! The Chicago Department of Environment, along with its Sustainable Backyard partners, will be hosting a series of free informative workshops across the city. You’ll learn what you can do to green your backyard; the basics of installing and maintaining rain barrels, compost bins, trees and native plants; and where to go for more resources. For more details, visit www.cityofchicago.org/rainbarrel

Resources
On the web: www.chicagohomecomposting.org


In Person (Compost Education Centers):
- Garfield Park Conservatory, 300 N Central Park Ave., 773-638-1766, www.garfieldconservatory.org
- Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences, 3807 W 111th Street, 773-233-0476 www.chicagoagr.org
- North Park Village Nature Center, 5801 N Pulaski Road, 312-744-5478, www.chicagoparkdistrict.com
- Eden Place Nature Center, 43rd Place and Shields Ave., 773-624-8686, www.fullerpark.com
- Chicago Center for Green Technology, 445 N Sacramento Boulevard, 312-746-9642 www.cityofchicago.org/Environment/GreenTech
What do you need to compost in your backyard?

1. Compost Bin: A compost bin that does not have any holes larger than ¼ inch, including a base for the ground… this will help keep pests out of your compost bin.

2. “Greens”: food scraps, green grass clippings, young weeds

3. “Browns”: dried leaves, straw, newspaper

4. Pitch fork or turning fork

5. Water source: rain barrel, watering can, or hose to keep the compost pile as moist as wrung-out sponge

What to Throw in Your Compost Bin?

Keep your compost bin from becoming a nuisance by limiting odor, litter, or dust and by only adding the "right" things to your compost bin…here are some DOs and DON'Ts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DO</th>
<th>DON'T</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Fallen Leaves</td>
<td>- Meat, bones or fish</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Woody prunings, chopped</td>
<td>- Dairy products or grease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Untreated wood sawdust</td>
<td>- Grains, breads or beans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Black &amp; white newspaper</td>
<td>- Dog, cat or bird feces</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Dried Lawn clippings</td>
<td>- Plywood or treated wood sawdust</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Fruit &amp; vegetable scraps</td>
<td>- Diseased plants</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Young weeds</td>
<td>- Weeds that went to seed</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Coffee grounds &amp; filters</td>
<td>- Invasive plants</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Egg shells</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Citrus rinds</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Tea bags</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Fresh lawn clippings</td>
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</tbody>
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Follow the Basic Compost 1-2-3

1. Feed yard trimmings to your bin as you generate them by chopping them first into pieces 6" or smaller. Food scraps and grass clippings need to be buried or mixed into the center of the pile (never “dump and run” or else you will have animals and flies attracted to the smells in your bin). Be sure to mix enough browns to balance your greens.

2. Maintain compost by turning it or mixing it each time you add material, or about once a week. As it gets full you only need to turn or mix the top layers. Keep it moist as a wrung out sponge.

3. Harvest the rich, brown, finished compost after 4-12 months. It can be found at the bottom and center of the pile. Use the harvest door if your bin has one, or remove the top layers of the pile to access the bottom layers. If you need a fine textured compost, sift out coarse, unfinished materials and return these to the pile.
Thank you for purchasing a compost bin and taking part in Chicago's effort to reduce waste while creating healthier landscapes. Please provide the following information and original itemized receipt to receive your rebate. *Illegal or incomplete forms will not be accepted.*

**Personal Information**
(please print clearly to receive your rebate):

Name: ________________________________
Address: ____________________________ Zip: 606_____
City: Chicago Zip: 606_____
Phone: ( ) ______________
Email Address: __________________________

**Compost Bin Information**

Where did you purchase your compost bin?

Date of Purchase: __________________________

Brand/Model: __________________________

Do you have a garden?   ____

If no, what will you do with your compost? ______________

Would you have purchased this item if a rebate was not available?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

Total Spent: $ ______________

Total Rebate Requested (50%, up to $50): $ ______________

Where did you hear about this program?

Where did you get this rebate form?

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I pledge the information I have provided is accurate and that I have read and understand the attached information. Signature: __________________________

(Date: ______________)

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**Rebate Information**

- Original receipt (be sure receipt clearly indicates purchase) and completed Rebate Form must be postmarked by December 31, 2011. The City of Chicago reserves the right to deny rebate forms with unclear receipts.
- Rebate checks may take up to 3 months to process.
- Rebate amount: 50% off original purchase price, up to $50 rebate, per household, per year.
- If you have any questions on the rebate process, please call 312.743.9283 or email rainbarrel@cityofchicago.org.
- Maximum rebates: Rain Barrels $40, Compost Bins $50, Native Plants $60, Trees $100.

To receive your rebate, please complete the top of this form and submit it along with the original receipt by December 31, 2011, to:

**Chicago Sustainable Backyard Program**

**Chicago Department of Environment**

30 N. LaSalle, 2nd Floor
Chicago, IL 60602

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**Rebate Rules/Restrictions**

- Rebates are only available to City of Chicago residents and compost bins must be installed at a Chicago residence. Limit one of each rebate type (rain barrel, compost bin, tree, native plants) per installation address, per year. Residents are encouraged to purchase more than one tree and native plant, but should submit all 2011 native plant and tree rebates at once.
- Compost bin must be purchased between September 1, 2010 and December 31, 2011.
- Rebates only apply to outdoor composting systems. Rebates will not be offered for indoor systems such as vermicomposting or Bokashi composting or for compost bins purchased online or outside the state of Illinois. Rebates are only available for the cost of compost bins. Other materials, taxes and individual costs will not be applied to rebates.