

What NOT To Add To Your Compost

Composting Basics

In a nutshell, compost is the term used for organic matter that has been decomposed (rotted) and recycled as a soil conditioner, to improve crop growth performance.

This is something that you must think about long before you need the compost, in most cases a year at least. Your SFG needs compost that is well rotted and crumbly to the feel. If it is still smelly then it is not ready for the garden yet.

The process of making your own compost is simple enough, as it is basically a load of organic material such as vegetable trimmings, grass cuttings, fallen leaves etc, that are dumped into a bin or wooden framework and left to decompose in a process that can take months or even years.

That's the simple answer; however there are certain things that you **should not add** to a compost heap such as..

- **Inorganic material:** Plastic and polythene will not break down to form compost. Obvious I know, but it had to be said!
- **Pet Poop:** Never add dog or cat droppings to the compost heap, as this can add several disease organisms that can turn your compost toxic.
- **Fish, fats, meat, bones and dairy:** These should not be added as they can just attract vermin, and cause your compost to smell badly.

- **Coal ash:** timber ash is fine for compost as it adds valuable potash, but coal ash is not as it can add high levels of sulphur to your compost.
- **Coloured paper:** Coloured paper can contain heavy metals and other toxic materials. These should not be added to your compost.
- **Diseased plants:** Any diseased or infested plants that you have to lift up should be burned or otherwise disposed of. Do not add to the compost as they will most likely end up back in your garden to repeat the cycle all over again!

Material that should be added to the compost is covered in other posts.

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