

Improve Your Soil with Compost

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Do you know one of the least expensive ways to fertilize your lawn and garden? Compost! Composting is the process of combining waste and yard debris such as leaves, grass clippings, and kitchen scraps and allowing them to decompose in a moist and oxygenated environment over a period of time. This turns them into a dark, crumbly organic soil mixture. Composting recycles nutrients so you can return them to soil to be used again by your plants.

Using compost also helps protect water quality in Peachtree Corners by preventing those materials from being improperly disposed of into storm drains or drainage ditches. Improper disposal of yard waste can lead to nutrient pollution (algae blooms) or clogging of the stormwater drainage system (flooding). However, when mixed with soil, compost provides many positive benefits including improved fertility and health of your soil, introduction of beneficial organisms into the soil and an improved ability to retain moisture. These benefits are not only good for your wallet, they are good for our water resources in Peachtree Corners! Here are some tips that may help you successfully compost your yard waste:

- **DO** turn the compost pile regularly
- **DO** mix grass clippings with other wastes to loosen them up
- **DO** keep the compost pile damp
- **DON'T** use unfinished compost
- **DON'T** add dog and cat droppings
- **DON'T** add meat, fish, bones or fatty food scraps to compost mixture

When constructing a compost bin, you can go from high-tech to no-tech, choosing the size, style and cost that is right for you. You can find many helpful hints for building a compost bin and for managing your compost with the Gwinnett Extension Service. This group works out of the University of Georgia to provide unbiased, research-based education to the communities in Gwinnett. So instead of letting those valuable nutrients escape to the streams, you can keep them in your yard by composting.

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