10 Household Items That Can Be Composted (and 5 That Can’t)



Composting household items is the most efficient way to create nutrient gold for your garden. If you can use up what you have on hand, you can save money and reduce the amount of waste you

create.

So what can you toss into the compost bin? Here are ten household items you can compost.

Composting Household Items

There's one big rule when composting household items: Make sure you cut them into tiny pieces!

Chucking big pieces of anything into your compost bin is an easy way to fail. Composting takes time. The bigger the items inside your bin, the longer it'll take for them to break down.

- **Leaf and grass clippings**. When your yard needs a good sprucing up, collect the dead plant matter and toss it into your compost bin.
- **Fruit and vegetable peels.** You can also throw in the cores of fruits like apples and peaches. Got rotting fruit at the back of your produce drawer? You can toss that into the compost, too.
- **Parchment paper.** This is also fine to put into the compost bin. Just make sure it doesn't have a waxy coating.
- **Houseplant detritus.** Frequent pruning helps keep houseplants looking neat and tidy. Don't throw away all those dead leaves, though. Pop them into your compost bin. As long as the plant matter isn't diseased, you can compost dead plant matter right at home. If you're dealing with diseased plants, throw those leaves and roots into the commercial composting bin—if your city provides one.

Composting Other Household Items

- **Teabags.** Not all tea bags are compostable. Check the label to make sure the bag will degrade in your compost bin. If in doubt, tear them open and compost the

innards.

- **Coffee grounds.** Regardless of the kind of coffee you love to drink, you're bound to create a lot of coffee ground waste. It can be annoying to head to the compost bin every time you brew coffee, though. Instead, grab a glass container and fill it with used grounds. When it's full, toss them into the compost.
- **Paper plates.** As long as they don't have a waxy coating, paper plates can go into the compost.
- **Bamboo skewers and chopsticks.** Again, as long as they aren't coated in some type of film, these are also fair game for the compost. I also like using these as supports for my tomato, pepper, and eggplant seedlings.
- **Cardboard.** Don't expect to chuck in giant pieces of cardboard and successfully compost it. Cut it into small pieces before tossing it into your bin.
- **Paper bags.** The same goes for paper bags. Make sure you're adding small pieces to your bin.

Household Items You Can't Compost

Composting household items is a great way to reduce your waste production. However, you can't compost everything. Here are some things you should avoid tossing into your compost bin:

- **Eggshells**. People will recommend composting eggshells until they're blue in the face, but the truth is that they decompose extremely slowly.
- **Meat and bones**. Save these for the commercial compost bin. Your at-home bin doesn't produce enough heat to kill off potentially dangerous pathogens.
- **Anything with a waxy or glossy coating.** A plastic coating means the item won't compost, and it may even contain harmful toxins.
- **Big branches and large plants.** It sounds like a good idea, but…it isn't. Anything big is going to take way too much time to decompose.

- **Cooked food**. You run the risk of inviting pests into or around your compost bin by adding cooked food to the mix.

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