

## COMPOST: QUESTIONS & CONCERNS: 2011

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<u>CONCERNS</u>	<u>POSSIBLE CAUSES</u>	<u>SOLUTIONS</u>
Accelerators		Not necessary.
Ammonia smell	Too many greens.	Add browns.
Ants	Too dry	Moisten to the consistency of a damp sponge.
Cool or cold pile	Small, or shallow pile Low outdoor temps Low on greens	In winter insulate the pile using organic materials like hay bales. Increase the depth or size of entire pile. Mix more greens into the pile. Compost in a black bin in direct sunlight.
Cold weather	Dormant composting organisms	Patience, or use bucket system of three 5-gallon buckets, snap-on lids, 1/4 <sup>th</sup> -inch holes around upper half. Transfer compost to empty bucket as it finishes. Hastens decomposition when added to cold outdoor pile, for temps below 40°F.
Dry center	Heat, drought	Mix, moisten and <b>maintain</b> to the consistency of a damp sponge.
Flies	Fruit, meat, grease	Eliminate greasy meat and dairy. Cover fruit with brown material. Bury table scraps deeper.
Five-gallon plastic buckets		Restaurants, hardware stores, friends in the building trades, etc. Clean with Bon Ami on a scouring sponge, then a putty knife to remove hardened debris. Rinse and air dry.
Infected green waste		Sanitize infected material by burying it in a hot compost pile to 55°C (131°F) for two weeks.
Foul odor	Not enough oxygen or carbon	Mix or layer more browns. Stir or mix the entire pile.
Innoculants		Not necessary.
Insects, millipedes, spiders	Healthy pile	Celebrate. Composting is proceeding apace.
Large items remain	Material is too big.	Shred, chop, & decrease the size of the compost particles to hasten composting process.
Maggots	Larvae of "compost-dwelling soldier flies"	Celebrate. Maggots are decomposing the food scraps.
pH	Too high? Too low?	Mature compost is neutral about 7.0. Do not add lime.
Scavengers	Exposed food scraps	Bury kitchen scraps deeper. Use a covered bin. Avoid: animal parts, dairy and grease.
Slow process	Small, or shallow pile; cold or dry	Increase the depth or size of entire pile. Mix more greens into the pile. Wet the pile until as moist as a wrung out sponge. Pre-compost indoors within three, 5-gallon buckets before adding to cold pile.
Smelly	Too wet, too many greens	Mix browns throughout.
Soggy compost	Too wet, too many greens	Mix browns throughout.
Weed seeds	Weeds	Hot composting at 135-160° F kills weed seeds.
Worms	Healthy pile	Celebrate. The decomposing micro-herd is working well.