

Composting: What to Add?

Rachael Boyle
Phillips-Rooks District Extension Agent
Agriculture and Natural Resources

For fastest composting, alternate layers of “greens” and “browns.” Greens are materials with a high amount of nitrogen as compared to carbon. Browns have less nitrogen as compared to carbon. The mixture of the two produces the “just right” amount of carbon and nitrogen to give the microorganisms just what they need to compost quickly. The most common greens are fresh grass clippings, coffee grounds, small weeds, fruit and veggie scraps, plant trimmings and animal manure. The browns would include shredded leaves, sawdust, wood chips, hay, straw, dried grass clippings and prunings from small branches. These materials can be mixed together at the start or layered. If layering, alternate layers of brown materials (6 to 8 inches deep) with green materials (2 to 3 inches thick) until you reach a height of 3 to 5 feet. If green materials are in short supply, add 1 to 2 cups per square yard of a commercial garden fertilizer in place of the green material layer.

For more information, please contact the local K-State Research and Extension Office. K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer.