

The 10-Minute Home Composting Starter

What goes in, what stays out and one small place to begin.



FIND WHAT YOU NEED

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START YOUR HOME COMPOSTING AND THE METHOD

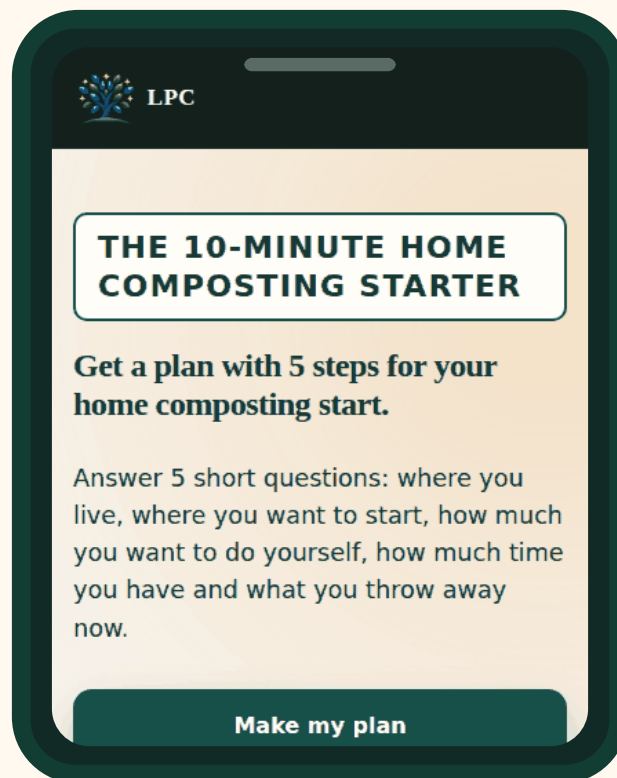
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Quick Route: Start with the Home Composting Companion App



If you have food scraps and do not know where to put them, the Home Composting Companion App can help you start now.

CONTINUED

You answer 5 questions, and the app gives you a plan with 5 steps: choose a method, choose a place, sort greens and browns, learn what stays out and set a day to look again.

Save favorites and add personal notes, so your app is tailored to your preferences.

You can create 2 complete personalized plans free.

Read the Important Note About Home Composting and Safety first. Then use the app for a plan, or keep reading and learn the method at your own pace.

Open the Home Composting Companion App

<https://composting.lifeperksclub.com>

A GENTLE NOTE

Important Note About Home Composting and Safety



This guide gives everyday ideas for choosing a place, sorting what goes in and what stays out and setting a day to look again. It is general

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information. It is not gardening, health, safety or environmental advice.

It does not promise that you will get compost, that the compost will be good or that it will have no smell. It does not promise that no pests will come. It gives no prices, no brands and no rules for any city or state.

The 10-minute frame, the 4 parts, the order of steps, the one place and the one check day are this guide's own ideas. They are a way to make a small start. They do not come from an official source.

The guide leans on one page from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the EPA. Whenever the guide says what that page says, it says "according to the EPA". Everything else is the guide's own suggestion, and it says so.

CONTINUED

If you are not sure whether something belongs in your pile, leave it out and write "ask" next to it. According to the EPA, if you do not have a space for composting, you can join a local municipal or community composting program.

This guide and the companion app never ask you for a card number, an account number, a Social Security number, an address or a password. Please do not type those into either one, and do not write them in your notes.

You never have to do a step that feels like too much. If a step does not fit your day, skip it and go on to another one.

[START HERE](#)

Why Composting Feels Like a Project



Most people do not decide against composting. They just never begin. Food scraps go in the trash every day, and nothing asks for a change.

Composting looks like a project. It brings pictures of bins, tools, piles and rules that you may not

CONTINUED

know. A project needs a free weekend, and a free weekend does not come. So the scraps keep going into the trash.

There is also no clear first step. Do you need a yard? Do you need a bin? Can you do it in an apartment? When a question has no short answer, the whole idea waits.

There is no date on it either. A bill gets a due date and a birthday gets a card, but a pile has no day on which it asks for attention. It only gets looked at when you remember.

That is why "I should start composting" can stay on a mind for months. Nobody did anything wrong. The week was busy, and the thought had no place to go.

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This guide does not turn you into an expert. It does something smaller. It shows you how to choose one place, sort what goes in and what stays out and pick one day to look again.

You do not need tools or knowledge. You need a pen or your phone, a look at your kitchen and about 10 minutes.

The 10 minutes are a starting frame, not a promise that you will be finished in 10 minutes. It means one short sitting is enough to know what comes next.

A small start also costs little. If you decide on a place today and change your mind next week, you have lost nothing. You only have a page that says what you learned.

THE 4 PARTS OF A HOME

The 4 Parts of a Home Composting Starter



Home composting can feel like a lot. This guide splits it into 4 parts so you look at less at a time.

CONTINUED

The split is the guide's own idea. It is not an official list.

Method and place. Where your scraps will go: a pile or a bin outdoors, or a worm bin indoors. According to the EPA, both are ways to compost at home.

Greens and browns. What goes in. According to the EPA, compost is made from 2 kinds of material, and the guide calls them greens and browns.

CONTINUED

What stays out. What does not belong in a backyard pile. According to the EPA, the list is long, and it is worth knowing before you start.

The check day. One date on which you look again. The date is the guide's own idea.

If something does not fit, put it with the part that feels closest. The parts are only there to help you look at less at a time.

You do not have to do all 4 parts on the same day. A small start with one part is a complete start.

THE METHOD

Your 10-Minute Home Composting Task Dump



A task dump means writing down everything that comes to mind, without sorting it. Set a timer for 10 minutes. This frame is the guide's own.

Take a piece of paper or open the notes on your phone. Write one line for each thing. Do not put

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them in order. Do not worry about whether it is big or small.

Write down what you know and what you do not know. What do I throw away most days? Where could a bin or a pile sit? Do I have a yard, a balcony or only a kitchen? Do I have dry leaves or paper to add?

You can also write down the small things you keep meaning to do. A line that says "find out about composting" is a complete line.

Your list may look like this: look at what is in the trash today, find a spot near the door, find a container with a lid, collect some paper and write one date. These are only examples. Your list will be different.

CONTINUED

Next to each line you may write which of the 4 parts it belongs to: method and place, greens and browns, what stays out or check day.

If a line is a question, put a question mark at the end. A page with 5 question marks is a good first page. It tells you exactly what to look up.

When the timer rings, stop. You do not have to finish the list. A half list is better than a list in your head.

Keep the page. The next sections tell you how to use it.

THE METHOD

The 10-Minute Home Composting Starter: Order of Steps



ONE PLACE - ONE LAYER - ONE CHECK DAY - 10 MINUTES

CONTINUED

Here is the order this guide suggests. It is the guide's own order. It is not from an official source, and you can change it to fit your day.

1. **Choose a method.** A pile or bin outdoors, or a worm bin indoors.

2. **Choose a place.** One spot that you can reach easily.

3. **Sort greens and browns.** Write what you have of each.

CONTINUED

4. **Check what stays out.** Keep the list close.

5. **Set a check day.** Choose the day to look again.

You do not need to finish one step before you start the next. But if you are not sure where to start, start at the top.

Take one step today. A short start that you finish is better than a big one that you drop.

If you share your home with someone, show them the page when you are done. 2 people looking at the same page often find something that one of them forgot.

The next sections go through the steps one by one.

HOME COMPOSTING

Home Composting: Choosing Your Method



The method and the place are the first 2 steps. This section uses the EPA page, and it adds a few small ideas of its own.

According to the EPA, you can compost at home in a backyard pile or bin, or you can compost food

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scraps indoors in a worm bin. The EPA calls the second way vermicomposting.

According to the EPA, a worm bin can be kept indoors. That is useful to know if you live in an apartment or have no yard.

According to the EPA, a bin should have a lid and no holes larger than 1/4 inch, to keep pests out. This guide does not promise that no pests will come.

This guide does not explain how to build or buy a bin. It does not name any brand. For that, look at the EPA page and at what is sold near you.

HOME COMPOSTING

Home Composting: Choosing Your Place



The guide adds one idea of its own about the place. Choose a spot you already pass: near the back door, by the kitchen or beside the garden path. A place you pass is a place you use.

CONTINUED

Write the method and the place on your page. If you do not know yet, write "ask" and keep going.

2 questions can help you choose. Do I have a yard or a balcony, or only a kitchen? How much do I want to do myself? Write the answers in one line each. The answers are yours, and nobody else needs to see them.

According to the EPA, scraps can wait in a container on the counter, under the sink, in the refrigerator or in the freezer until you take them to the pile. The guide's own idea is to use one small container with a lid.

HOME COMPOSTING

Home Composting: Greens, the Kitchen Scraps



Greens are the third step, part 1. The word comes from the EPA page. This section uses only what that page says.

CONTINUED

The EPA page sorts what goes into compost into 2 kinds, greens and browns. Kitchen scraps are the main part of the greens.

According to the EPA, greens include fruit and vegetable scraps.

According to the EPA, greens also include grass clippings, coffee grounds and paper filters, and paper tea bags without staples.

According to the EPA, crushed eggshells are also on the list.

Take the list to your kitchen. Look at what you threw away yesterday. Write down which of those things are greens. The list on your page is your own start.

CONTINUED

The guide does not say how much of each to use. It only helps you see what you already have.

Small habit: put a note on the lid of your container that says "greens in". A short label does not need words from anyone else.

Another small habit is the kitchen walk. Once, today, look in the trash, the sink and the fridge and write down the scraps you see. Do it once and put the page away. You do not have to count.

If something is not on the list, do not guess. Write "ask" next to it and look at the EPA page.

HOME COMPOSTING

Home Composting: Browns and the Balance



Browns are the third step, part 2. This section also uses the EPA page.

According to the EPA, browns include dry leaves, plant stalks and twigs, and untreated wood chips.

CONTINUED

According to the EPA, browns also include shredded paper that is not glossy or colored, shredded brown paper bags, and shredded cardboard without wax, tape or glue.

Look around your home and write down what you have. A stack of plain paper bags, a cardboard box or a bag of leaves from the yard can all go on the list.

According to the EPA, a pile should have at least 2 to 3 times as much brown as green, by volume. That is the balance.

CONTINUED

According to the EPA, you should cover food scraps with 4 to 8 inches of dry leaves or other browns.

This is where "one layer" comes from. Put the scraps in, then cover them with browns. The guide's own idea is to keep a bag or a bucket of browns next to the container, so the cover is always close.

The guide does not say how your pile will look or smell. It only helps you remember the balance and the cover.

If you have no browns today, write "find browns" on your page. That is a complete step.

HOME COMPOSTING

Home Composting: What Stays Out



Some things do not belong in a backyard pile. This is the fourth step, and it is worth reading slowly. This section uses the EPA page.

According to the EPA, meat, fish and bones do not belong in a backyard pile. The same goes for

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cheese and other dairy, and for fats, oils and grease.

According to the EPA, cooked food is also on the list, though small amounts are fine.

According to the EPA, compostable foodservice ware and compostable bags do not belong in a backyard pile.

According to the EPA, plants and grass treated with herbicide, aggressive weeds, weeds with seeds, and diseased or pest-infested plants stay out.

CONTINUED

According to the EPA, treated or painted wood stays out.

According to the EPA, pet waste and cat litter stay out.

According to the EPA, dryer lint, glossy paper and the stickers on fruit stay out too.

Copy the list onto your page, or take a photo of it. Put it where you sort your scraps.

If you are not sure about an item, leave it out and write "ask". The guide does not decide for you. It only helps you keep the list in sight.

HOME COMPOSTING

Home Composting: How Long It Takes



Time is the part that surprises people. This section uses the EPA page, and it adds a way to keep the waiting from feeling long.

According to the EPA, a well-maintained pile can be finished in about 3 to 5 months. According to

CONTINUED

the EPA, a pile that is not tended can take up to a year.

According to the EPA, the finished compost should be left to cure for at least 4 weeks after the pile stops getting warm.

According to the EPA, in a worm bin you can harvest after 3 to 6 months. According to the EPA, a worm bin starts with about 1 pound of red wiggler worms.

This guide does not say whether your compost will be ready in that time. It does not say what to do with it afterwards. It only gives you the numbers as the EPA gives them.

CONTINUED

The guide's own idea is to put the waiting on the calendar. Write today's date. Write the date about 3 months from now. Write "look at the pile" on that day.

Between those dates, you do not have to do anything special. Keep adding scraps and browns, and look in on the pile on your check day.

If you forget a date, nothing is lost. Write the new date and go on.

A long wait can feel like nothing is happening. A line in your notes helps: "started on this day". When you read it later, you will see how far you have come.

HOME COMPOSTING WITH KIDS, A

Home Composting With Kids, a Partner or Housemates



Home composting is easier when everyone knows what is happening. This section is the guide's own set of ideas, and it only covers small, practical things.

CONTINUED

With children. Let them sort. Hold up a scrap and ask, "Is this a green, or does it stay out?" Keep the list in sight and let them find the answer on it.

With a partner. Share the page. One person keeps the container and the other person takes it out. Swap after a month.

With housemates. Put the list of what stays out on the container and say who empties it. Write the name and the day.

CONTINUED

With a parent. If you are helping a parent, sit down with them at the kitchen table. Write the 4 parts on one page and let them choose the place.

Alone. Do the start at a time of day when you have energy. Do one step and stop when you want.

In every case, say the plan out loud before you start. Say how long it will take and who does what.

If someone does not want to take part, do not argue. Do your own part. Ask again another day.

STEP BY STEP

The Night Before Your Home Composting Start



The night before is easier when the things are close. This section is the guide's own plan. It only takes a few minutes.

Look at your calendar and choose a 10-minute slot for tomorrow. Write it down.

CONTINUED

Put a pen and a piece of paper, or your phone, where you will see them in the morning. If you have your task dump, put it with them.

Find a container with a lid for the scraps, or write "find a container" at the top of your page. Put it where you will use it.

Look for browns. A paper bag, a box or a bag of leaves is enough for a first day. Put it close to the container.

CONTINUED

Decide where the pile, the bin or the worm bin will go, or write "ask" if you do not know yet.

If you share your home, tell the others that you will try. A short message is enough.

You do not need to prepare more than this. A small start tonight makes tomorrow lighter.

STEP BY STEP

Home Composting Start Day: A One-Page Plan



A start is easier with a one-page plan. The plan is the guide's own. Write it on a single sheet and keep it where you can reach it.

At the top. Write the date and the time you will start and stop.

CONTINUED

Step 1: Choose a method (about 2 minutes). Pile or bin outdoors, or a worm bin indoors. Write your choice.

Step 2: Choose a place (about 2 minutes). One spot you pass often. Write it down.

Step 3: Sort greens and browns (about 3 minutes). Write what you have of each.

Step 4: Check what stays out (about 2 minutes). Put the list where you sort your scraps.

CONTINUED**Step 5: Set a check day (about 1 minute).**

Choose a day to look again. Put it in your calendar.

The times are only a rough guide. The frame is the guide's own.

At the bottom. Write 3 lines: what I did today, what I will ask and what I will do on the check day.

When the time is up, stop. Tell someone what you did, in one sentence. That is the end of the day.

If the plan does not fit on one page, you wrote too much. Cross out one line and keep the rest.

THE METHOD

After Your Home Composting Start: Your First 10 Minutes



When you finish the start, you do not have to be done with everything. This section gives you a short next step. The 10-minute frame is the guide's own.

CONTINUED

Look at your page. You may see a method, a place, a few lists and a few lines that say "ask".

Take the first 3 minutes to look at the lines that say "ask". Pick one. Write where you will look for the answer. For most of them, the answer is on the EPA page.

Take the next 3 minutes to do one small thing. It may be finding a container, collecting some paper or choosing the place for the pile.

Take the next 2 minutes to put the page where you can find it next time. The kitchen, a folder or a photo on your phone all work.

CONTINUED

Take the last 2 minutes to write the check day in your calendar. Name it clearly: "Compost check".

Do not try to do all of it today. A short list that you come back to is better than a long list that you drop.

If you want one more small thing, read the list of what stays out once more, out loud. Hearing it helps it stick.

Then stop for the day.

HOME COMPOSTING ITEMS THAT

Home Composting Items That Get Forgotten



Some things are easy to forget. This list is the guide's own set of reminders. It is not official, and some may not apply to you.

- The container for scraps, which is still in a cupboard.

CONTINUED

- The browns, which are not where the scraps are.
- The list of what stays out, which nobody reads twice.
- The dry leaves that went to the curb last week.
- The paper that was shredded but is still in the bag.
- The note you wrote last time and cannot find.

CONTINUED

- The date for the next look at the pile.
- The person who said they would empty the container.
- The EPA page, which has the lists.

If you see something here that you have not looked at, do not feel bad. These are the ones that everyone forgets, because they do not make noise.

Pick one from the list. Add it to your page. Write it down and put a date next to it.

If you use the app, your answers to 5 short questions shape the plan.

WHERE TO START

When Your Home Composting Starter Falls Apart



Plans change. A busy week arrives. The timer rings and you have only chosen a place. This section is for those days. The ideas are the guide's own.

You ran out of time. Stop. Write down where you stopped. Do the rest in another 10 minutes.

CONTINUED

You could not find a container. Write "find a container" and go on to the lists. You can come back to it.

You have no browns. Write "find browns". According to the EPA, browns can be dry leaves, shredded paper or shredded cardboard. Look around for those.

You are not sure about an item. Leave it out. Write "ask". Look at the list of what stays out.

Someone else empties the container. Do not argue. Write their name on the page and ask them what they have noticed.

CONTINUED

The month went by. It happens. Write today's date and start again. You do not have to make up for it.

You do not feel like it. Do one thing: put one scrap in the container. Then stop. A small start counts.

You do not have to do a perfect start. A short, calm sitting can help more than a perfect plan that you never use.

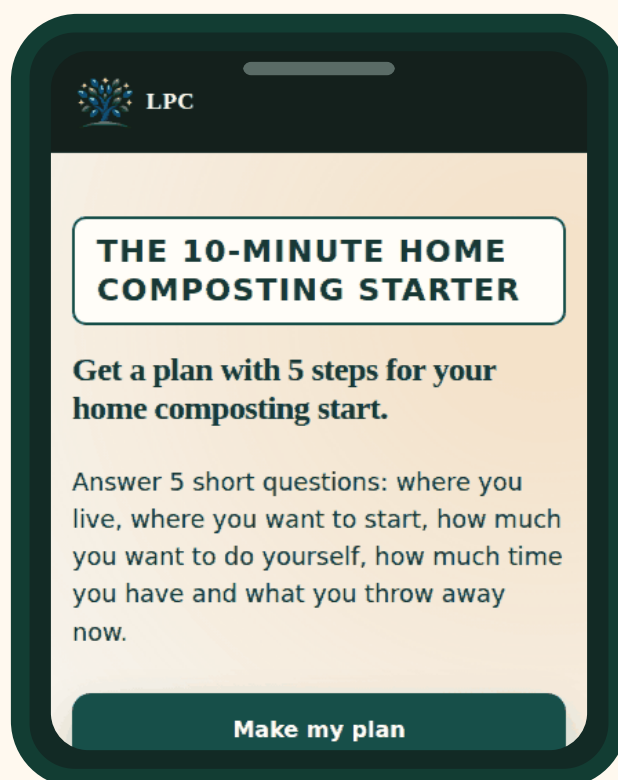
When you are ready, start again. Open your page. Pick the first step.

OPTIONAL COMPANION APP

The Home Composting Companion App

This guide explains the method. The Home Composting Companion App turns it into a plan for your life.

You answer 5 questions: whether you live in a house or an apartment, whether you have a garden



CONTINUED

or want to start indoors, how much you want to do yourself, how much time you have and what you throw away now.

The app gives you a plan with 5 steps: choose a method, choose a place, sort greens and browns, learn what stays out and set a day to look again.

The app gives no advice about gardening, health or any rules where you live. It does not promise that you will get compost.

Save favorites and add personal notes, so your app is tailored to your preferences.

CONTINUED

You can add a note that says when you last looked at your pile.

You can create 2 complete personalized plans free. After that, a one-time unlock of \$9 keeps it yours. There is no subscription and no renewal.

The app never asks for a card number, an account number, a Social Security number, an address or a password.

Open the Home Composting Companion App

<https://composting.lifeperksclub.com>

More Mini Guides and Companion Apps:
<https://composting.lifeperksclub.com/hub>

FINAL CHECKLIST

Final Checklist: The 10-Minute Home Composting Starter



☐ I wrote down what I know and what I do not know in a 10-minute task dump.

☐ I chose a method: a pile or bin outdoors, or a worm bin indoors.

CONTINUED

☐ I chose one place that I can reach easily.

☐ I wrote down which greens I have, from the EPA list.

☐ I wrote down which browns I have, from the EPA list.

☐ I put the list of what stays out where I sort my scraps.

☐ I know the balance: according to the EPA, at least 2 to 3 times as much brown as green.

CONTINUED

☐ I wrote one note in my own words and set one check day.

☐ I did not write any card numbers, address or passwords on my page.

☐ I know that this guide does not promise compost, and that the EPA page is the place to look.

The phrase 10-minute home composting starter means one short sitting in which you choose a place, sort what goes in and what stays out and set a day to look again.

SOURCES

Sources Used for Home Composting Guidance

The statements about methods, greens, browns, what stays out and how long it takes come from one U.S. government page. It was checked again on October 19, 2026, and it shows that it was last updated on December 8, 2025. Check the official page for the latest wording.

The page is about composting at home.

This guide uses it only for these ideas.

CONTINUED

Compost at home in a pile or bin outdoors, or in a worm bin indoors. Mix greens and browns, with at least 2 to 3 times as much brown as green, and cover scraps with 4 to 8 inches of dry leaves or other browns.

Know what stays out of a backyard pile, and expect a well-maintained pile to take about 3 to 5 months, with at least 4 weeks to cure.

The 4 parts, the one place, the one check day, the 10-minute task dump, the night before, the day

CONTINUED

and the first minutes after the start are our own suggestions. They are not official guidance.

This guide gives no gardening advice, no prices and no rules for any city or state. If you do not have a space for composting, the EPA says you can join a local municipal or community composting program.

- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Composting At Home: methods, greens and browns, what stays out, balance and time.

<https://www.epa.gov/recycle/composting-home>

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