

# Composting

In Minnesota, it has been illegal to put yard waste into the garbage since the early 1990's; it takes up too much valuable landfill space. A much better solution for yard waste is a composting bin or facility. The Chisago County Solid Waste Ordinance allows residents three composting options: home compost, self-haul to a compost facility, or hire a hauler to take it to a compost site. If you hire a hauler, the ordinance *prohibits* placing yard waste in black plastic bags; it must be placed in a compostable bag.

The landfill ban on yard waste prompted many municipalities and business to create compost sites to serve their residents and customers.

## City Compost Sites Open to Residents:

- **Chisago Lakes Joint Sewage Treatment Facility**, 31705 Lofton Ave N., Chisago City. Serving the cities of:  
**Chisago City** - (651) 257-4162  
**Lindstrom** - (651) 257-0620  
**Stacy** - (651) 462-4486
- **North Branch Sewage Treatment Facility**, near the Industrial Park on Ash Street, (651) 674-8113
- **Rush City**, (651) 358-4743
- **Shafer**, Sewage Treatment Facility, (651) 257-4726
- **Taylors Falls**, Sewage Treatment Facility, (651) 465-5133

## Compost Sites Open to All Chisago County Residents for a Fee:

- **ECSWC Transfer Station**, South side of Highway 95, east of Cambridge, (763) 689-4056. Brush only for a fee. Open Friday 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. and Saturday 8:00 a.m. -12:00 p.m.
- **SRC Inc.**, 6320 East Viking Blvd., Wyoming. (651) 462-5298. Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., and Saturday 8:00 a.m.-12:00 noon. [www.mytrashservice.com](http://www.mytrashservice.com) Compost site and brush pile open to the public for a fee.

### How to Compost at Home

Home composting is easy and requires little time or money. Finished compost makes a great soil enhancer for the garden, adding organic matter to loosen up clay soil, nutrients to sandy soil, and helps retain soil moisture around flowers, shrubs, and vegetables.

Compost bins can be found at your local home improvement or garden store, as well as online. Prices start around fifty dollars up to several hundred dollars, depending on features.

You can also build your own composter using lumber or wire fencing. One of the easiest designs uses 4' high wire fencing. Create a circular enclosure with the fencing approximately four feet in diameter. Cut the fencing, leaving the ends sticking out so you can bend the wire and connect the two ends, creating a circle. Or, you can just use the "pile" method without a bin. Your pile should be between 3' x 3' x 3' and 5'x 5'x 5'.



For the compost ingredients, start with a layer of sticks ¼" or smaller in diameter to create an air layer. On top of this, layer green matter over brown for a number of layers; you can also add a layer of dirt in order to get more microbes into the pile. The green layer supplies the nitrogen and consists of fresh grass, green leaves, plant trimming, and kitchen wastes (coffee grounds, tea bags, fruit and veggie scraps). The brown layer supplies the carbon, and consists of dried grass or leaves, straw, wood chips or twigs no larger than ¼". Do not mix meat, dairy, pet waste, diseased plants, weed seeds, or wood/coal ash into your compost bin as these items cause problems.

In order to keep the bacteria and fungi alive to "cook" your compost pile, make sure it stays moist by occasionally watering it. Turn it with a pitch fork one to two times a month to keep it composting evenly and to reduce odors. A summer pile will take 4-6 weeks to finish. You'll know it's done when the pile looks dark and crumbly and has a nice earthy smell to it.