

COMPOSTING IN STYLE

There are several different styles of composting. Some require more time and effort, but yield quicker results. Many composters find they maximize their efficiency by practicing more than one type of composting, or by setting up multiple bin systems to have several stages of decomposition occurring simultaneously. Which style of composting best fits your needs and lifestyle?



PASSIVE COMPOSTING

is a more relaxed style of composting, and involves turning and adding water less frequently. The pile won't generate as much heat and may dry out at times, so the materials won't decompose as quickly, and weed seeds may not be killed.



ACTIVE COMPOSTING

is a more engaged style of composting, and involves turning the pile on a regular basis and maintaining optimal moisture and temperature levels. This method kills weed seeds and produces finished compost in the shortest period of time.



VERMICOMPOSTING

or, composting with red worms, is a fun and easy way to recycle your food scraps. It uses less space than traditional composting, and can be done in an indoor setting. This method produces worm castings, another nutrient-rich soil amendment.

COMPOST STYLE GUIDE

QUESTIONS TO ASK	 PASSIVE COMPOSTING	 ACTIVE COMPOSTING	 VERMICOMPOSTING
<i>What type of materials do I want to compost?</i>	Fresh and dried yard debris, kitchen scraps, paper products		Kitchen scraps, paper products
<i>What type of space do I have to compost in?</i>	Outdoor area with additional space around the bin for turning and harvesting		Apartment or condo, limited yard space
<i>How much effort do I want to put in?</i>	Low effort, infrequent maintenance (turning and watering when convenient)	Engaged effort, frequent maintenance (turning and watering regularly)	Low-moderate effort, moderate maintenance (maintaining consistent food and moisture supply)
<i>How soon do I want a finished product?</i>	Finished compost expected in 6-18 months	Finished compost expected in 3-6 months	Finished worm castings expected in 3-4 months

COMPOST BINS

A compost bin will help to keep your compost pile neat and tidy, deter rodent entry, and retain heat and moisture during decomposition. Compost bins kept in the shade are less likely to require frequent watering. Ideally, bins are placed on soil to invite a community of beneficial decomposers into the pile.

HOMEMADE BINS

Homemade bins can be easily constructed out of wood, wire mesh, scrap pallets, and other materials commonly found around the home. To get a set of plans for building your own traditional backyard bin or worm bin visit solanacenter.org/ciy



PURCHASED BINS

Purchased bins come in a variety of styles. They can be purchased at nurseries and garden centers, or ordered directly from the manufacturer. To see examples of the different types of composting bins, visit one of the Composting Demonstration Gardens around the County. For a list of sites, visit solanacenter.org/ciy

Come by the Solana Center office or visit us online at solanacenter.org/ciy to learn more about our subsidized bin program!