Grasscycling is a quick and easy way to recycle your grass clippings and fertilize your soil. Instead of bagging and throwing away your clippings, which costs time and money, reduces the need for frequent watering, and attracts chemical fertilizers to your garden, you can leave the grass clippings on the lawn. The nitrogen rich clippings are quickly absorbed into the soil and help keep your lawn nutrient rich.

How to Tell When Your Compost is Ready

Compost can be used as a potting mix or seed starter for growing container plants, seedlings, transplants. A good mix will include two parts finely screened compost, one part coarse sand, one part vermicompost, and one part peat moss.

Mulching

Mulch is different from compost in the way that the material is processed and collected. Mulch is naturally decomposed material that can be used as a soil amendment, which is incorporated into the soil to improve its structure and texture.

Soil incorporation is the most common use for compost, whether applied to sandy or clayey soil, coarse or fine texture. Mulching helps to improve the soil’s structure and texture, increases its nutrient levels, and improves its water holding capacity.

Top dress your planters by spreading compost to a depth of 2 inches around the base of plants and shrubs, much like a mulch application. Spread compost over the surface of the lawn in a 1-2 inch layer. You can add 50% compost and 50% top soil for most applications. Mulch and compost can be applied to any area throughout the lawn.

Mulch can be made at home by collecting your own grass clippings. If you have a large yard, you may want to consider purchasing a mulching lawn mower or a power chipper. If you have a smaller yard, you can use a mulching mower, which will chop the grass into smaller pieces.

COMPOSTING DEMONSTRATION GARDENS

Backyard composting is best learned by doing. With experience, you will learn what compost is best for your particular situation. In the meantime, the following list of resources and information will help you get started.

MULCHING

Mulching is the practice of laying a layer of organic material on top of the soil to help retain moisture and reduce the need for irrigation. Mulch can also help to suppress weeds, prevent soil erosion, and improve soil structure.

Mulching can be done by using a mulching lawn mower, a power chipper, or by hand. To create compost, you can use grass clippings, leaves, wood chips, and other organic materials.

COMPOSTING TROUBLESHOOTING

Here is a list of common composting problems and solutions to help you get started.

Additional Resources

A list of additional resources for backyard composting can be found on our website. These resources include information on composting, mulching, and gardening in general.

Backyard composting is often done to improve soil quality and reduce the need for irrigation. If you have a large yard, you may want to consider purchasing a mulching lawn mower or a power chipper. If you have a smaller yard, you can use a mulching mower, which will chop the grass into smaller pieces. Mulch can also help to suppress weeds, prevent soil erosion, and improve soil structure.
Composting Basics

Composting is nature’s way to recycle your yard trimmings and kitchen scraps into compost, or humus, the nutrient-rich soil that results from proper composting. Composting is practiced almost anywhere in the world and at almost any scale — from a little bit of space, a bin, and a basic understanding of the composting process.

**Composting in Style**

There are several different styles of composting. Some require more time, labor and space than others. This guide will help you by choosing the style that best fits your needs and schedule.

**Getting Started**

To get started, you need to purchase or make a bin specifically designed for composting. The bins are generally 10” to 15” deep, have a tight-fitting lid and a mesh bottom for drainage and the prevention of rodents. Some designs include grates for collecting “worm tea,” natural ventilation holes, and a bottom for drainage and the prevention of rodents.

Next, make a “bed” for your worms. worms like to live under lots of moist paper or leaves. You can create a moist environment by putting layers of newspaper and straw or wood chips, or by spraying down your worms with water. Some worms will migrate toward the food, leaving the other half of the pile free of weed seeds. But compost will still be ready to harvest. Your vermicompost is generally about three weeks. The worms are voracious eaters, consuming up to half of the material they are fed. You can add fresh bedding to the side of the bin that was just emptied. Your vermicompost will usually be ready to harvest in three or four weeks.

**Benefits of Yard and Food Composting**

- **Conserves water** by recycling valuable yard trimmings and food scraps.
- **Extends the life of the soil** by adding nutrients and organic matter.
- **Improves health** and fertility by preventing the need to purchase synthetic fertilizers.
- **Saves you money** by creating a valuable nutrient-rich compost.

**Composting Composts Can Be Practiced Almost Anywhere**

Composting can be practiced almost anywhere in the world and at almost any scale — from little bit of space, a bin, and a basic understanding of the composting process.