



# Bin Management Guide

## Adding Compost

1. When establishing a new compost batch in Bin 1, create a one foot to 18 inch base of horse manure preblended with wood chips, hay (1:1 ratio), or sawdust (2:1 ratio manure to sawdust).
2. As food scraps are brought to the bins, layer fresh food scraps first. Use a rake to level the layer. Food scraps should not be within one foot of the edge of the bin (looking down the food scraps should look like a square within a larger square of the carbon materials on which they were laid).
3. Cover the food scraps with the carbon material mix so that the carbon materials cap the scraps and fill in around their outer perimeter. Use the recipe provided to you to maintain the proper ratios of food scraps to other materials in the blend.

## Pile Monitoring

4. Pile monitoring should occur in bins two or more times per week. This includes monitoring the pile's temperature, moisture, and odor, as well as visually observing the pile. Monitor temperature at one foot and at 1 1/2- 3 foot depth in at least two locations per bin. Monitoring results should be recorded and filed. Keep surgical gloves and a pitch fork on hand for the moisture squeeze test.



## Pile Turning and Management

5. The monitoring results should be used to determine your turning activities. As the temperature drops and in order to get the temperature to rise, the pile contents should be turned to the next bin or stirred with a pitch fork to homogenize the materials and integrate air into the pile. Turn thoroughly, so that with multiple turnings all of the material gets incorporated into the center "hot" regions of the pile.
6. If a pile requires more moisture, the water should be applied at a relatively low rate and care should be taken to prevent over-watering.
7. When pile contents are rotated from one bin to the next, pile contents should be "fluffed" not "flopped" as they are being added to the new bin. This will significantly improve composting and will make the time spent moving the material substantially more effective. Bins with contents of like age can be combined to conserve space and promote more complete decomposition.

## Compost Curing

8. Compost is finished when when the original materials are no longer identifiable. It should have a rich "earthy aroma", be darker in color, and feel crumbly and friable.
9. Compost should cure for one month or longer once it appears finished. This will ensure it is of the highest quality prior to use. The entire process will likely take over 9 months and maybe up to a year.



## References

On-Site Composting for Schools  
Planning and Implementing a Program for Success.  
Highfields Center for Composting. Hardwick, VT. Web  
Resource: No longer available.

## Photos

- Highfields Center For Composting
- Ferrisburgh Central School
- Srise

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Companion Resources:

Bin System Design Guide  
School Implementation Guide  
Compost Recipe Guide  
Compost Planning Checklist  
Compost Bin Monitoring Log

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