

Compost Material:	Can I compost this?	Green or Brown:	Notes:
Brown leaves	Yes	Brown	An excellent and abundant source of carbon. Collect them in the fall. Shred before composting for better results.
Green plants	Yes	Green	Adds plenty of bulk. A good source of nitrogen.
Twigs & branches	Yes	Brown	Harder to decompose but can add structure for aeration.
Pine needles	Yes	Brown	Could be considered "green" if fresh-cut branches. Be careful, with the quantity - pine needles are acidic.
Cornstalks/husks	Yes	Brown	Very hard to break down, so chop them up before composting.
Weeds	Yes	Green	Bury them in the center of the pile to thermally kill the seeds - add some extra nitrogen material to help them cook.
Flowers	Yes	Green	Source of nitrogen when fresh.
Grass clippings	Yes	Green	A high-nitrogen source. Mix them with browns such as dried leaves to avoid matting and improve air supply.
Straw & hay	Yes	Brown	Good source of carbon, and adds structure. Should be mixed with greens to help decomposition.
Straw bedding	careful	Brown	Straw bedding from animals can be used if they are herbivores. If the animal eats meat it can contain pathogens.
Sawdust	Yes	Brown	A good source of carbon that breaks down quickly. Avoid plywood chips - the glue is potentially toxic to microbes.
Diseased plants	No	Green	You risk spreading the disease further in your garden if your compost isn't hot enough.
Plants with pesticides	No	Green	Avoid any chemically treated material. The chemicals could also kill off the composting microorganisms.

Spent grains	Yes	Green	The leftover sugars are great food for composting microbes. Spread them thinly and mix them with browns to avoid anaerobic conditions.
Fruit & vegetable scraps	Yes	Green	Fruit and vegetables are a good source of nitrogen and moisture.
Cooked food	No	Green	Avoid cooked food waste which is cooked with fats. This is slow to decompose and can attract pests.
Bread & pasta	Yes	Green	Includes cookies, rice, etc. Bury these things in your compost to avoid attracting pests.
Tea & tea bags	Yes	Green	The metal staples on bags are too small to be worried about. Leave them in.
Coffee grounds & filters	Yes	Green	An excellent source of nitrogen. Can also discourage pests thanks to the odor.
Peanut hulls	Yes	Green	Contributes nitrogen and breaks down quite quickly. Other nut shells are long to decompose.
Eggshells	Yes	-	Contains about 95% calcium, which could be a useful amendment for plants. Grind them up before composting.
Fish	No	Green	Attracts pests and is generally full of fats, which slow down composting. Produces bad smells. Can contain bacteria which is a safety issue.
Meat scraps	No	Green	Decomposes slowly, smells bad, and can attract vermin and flies. Can contain bacteria which is a safety issue.
Bones	No	Green	Bones decompose very very slowly. Not worth putting in compost.
Dairy products	careful	-	High in fats which slow down composting and should generally be avoided. But it can be composted if buried deep in compost
Oils & fats	No	Brown	As a general rule, oil and grease contaminates compost ingredients and prevents the

			microorganisms from doing their job.
Wood ash	Yes	Brown	A good source of potash (potassium-nitrate). Best added in layers because it washes away easily.
Coal ash	No	Brown	Avoid coal ash which can be toxic to plants. Don't use ash from barbecues which can be contaminated with meat fat.
Seaweed	Yes	Nitrogen	Kelp is low in nitrogen but contains potassium and many other minerals.
Paper	Yes	Brown	In general, paper and cardboard should be shredded before composting.
Newspaper	Yes	Brown	Shred before use. Most printing inks now use vegetable dyes.
Manure from herbivores	Yes	Green	A good source of nitrogen. Often mixed with bedding like straw or wood shavings, which also adds carbon.
Cat litter	No	Green	Not considered safe because manures from meat-eating animals can contain harmful bacteria or parasites.
Dog poop	No	Green	Avoid manures from meat-eating animals for safety concerns.
Dryer lint	Yes	Brown	The carbon content can help add structure.
Vacuum dust	Yes	-	Why not?
Hair	Yes	Green	Human and animal hair can be composted.
Feathers	Yes	Green	Feathers contain a lot of nitrogen.
Soil	Yes	-	Soil is good to add to compost when you have a large amount of fresh material. It contributes useful microbes & helps inoculate the pile.
Used potting soil	Yes	-	Even if slightly depleted it contributes useful humus.