

# The Basics of Composting

## ■ The components

### ■ Nitrogen

- Food scraps – including meat, bones, food oils, dairy – some will not agree
- Fresh grass clippings and green plants

### ■ Carbon

- Yard / garden waste – old leaves and rotted grass clippings, dead plants
- Home waste - shredded paper, napkins, paper towels and the tube

### ■ Oxygen

- The material needs to be turned periodically to inject oxygen for aerobic action

## ■ The balance between the components:

- Unscientifically (by me) determined by odor & appearance
  - Roughly 3 carbon : 1 nitrogen by volume
  - Strong foul smell – not enough carbon
  - Earthy smell and moist - good

# The Process

- Food waste and carbon material is added together and turned for about four weeks
  - Carbon is periodically added to maintain the balance
- After about four weeks the tumbler is “set” (no additions) and allowed to “work” for two or more weeks – seasonal temps
  - During that time food waste is stored in sealed pails outside
- Completed compost is unloaded, piled and covered by a tarp and ready for use
- A new batch is then started with the stored food scraps



# The Tools and Resources You'll Need

- A collection container in the kitchen
  - The size is determined by how often it will be emptied
- A compost tumbler or container – secure from wildlife
  - Improvised barrel or container can be used – 55 gallon barrel
  - Material must be turned periodically for aerobic action
- Carbon resources
  - Year to year piles using last year's leaves and clippings
  - Chopped leaves are best