



## COMPOST TROUBLESHOOTING GUIDE

PROBLEM	CAUSE	SOLUTION
Bad odor (rotten smell)	Too much moisture	Turn the compost or add dry, porous material like straw, shredded cardboard or newspaper
Bad odor (ammonia smell)	Too much nitrogen compared to carbon Compacted leaves Inadequate air	Add high-carbon materials like straw, sawdust, wood chips Turn the compost or make the pile smaller Turn the compost
Low compost temperature	Pile is too small Too little moisture Too much moisture Too little air Lack of nitrogen Cold weather Particle size too large	Increase size, insulate sides Add water and turn the compost Turn the compost and mix in dry, brown materials Turn the compost Mix in nitrogen source (greens): grass clippings, manure, or organic nitrogen fertilizer Increase pile size or insulate pile with a layer of straw or plastic Chip or grind materials
Pile is dry throughout	Not enough water; too much wood material	Turn pile and moisten material; add fresh green materials; cover pile
Compost pile is damp and warm only in middle	Pile is too small	Collect more material and mix the old ingredients into a new pile
Pest infestation: dogs, rodents, insects	Improper food scraps added Food scraps not covered	Don't add meat, fats, bones or other animal products Place fruit and vegetable scraps in the center of pile, cover with soil or compost; use rodent-proof bins
Neighbor complains	Compost pile is ugly	Construct covered bin system to keep it neat

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