



In Your
Own Backyard

Composting!

Isolde Finney



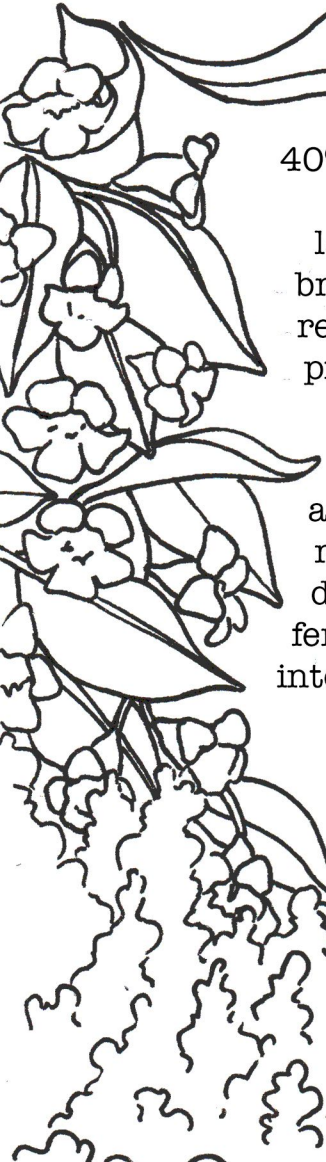
The Purpose of this Book

With growing concerns about environmental issues, many of us want to help better the environment but feel overwhelmed by the magnitude of climate change issues. This interactive project encourages colorful, artistic expression while hopefully inspiring reflection on how we treat our waste. The dream of this project is that a few more homes join the composting movement.

This coloring book provides information on why composting is good for the environment and different options for setting up a compost system. Enjoy coloring these pages, and please take a moment to consider what you can do to make the world a little better.



Why Compost?

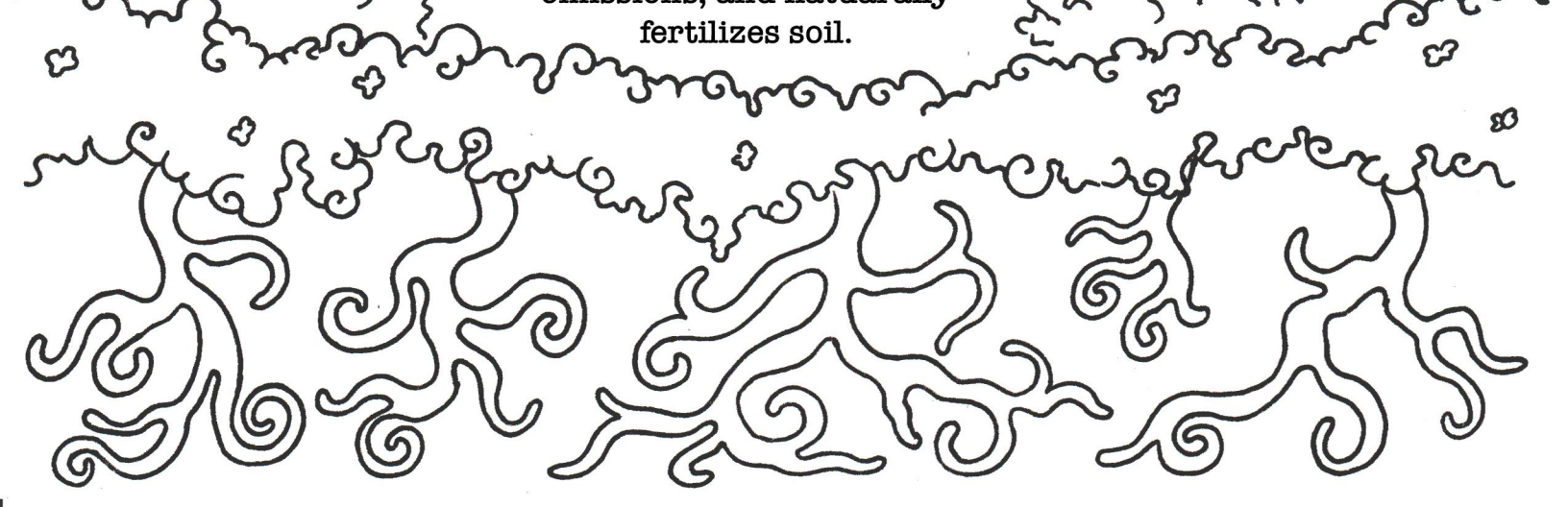
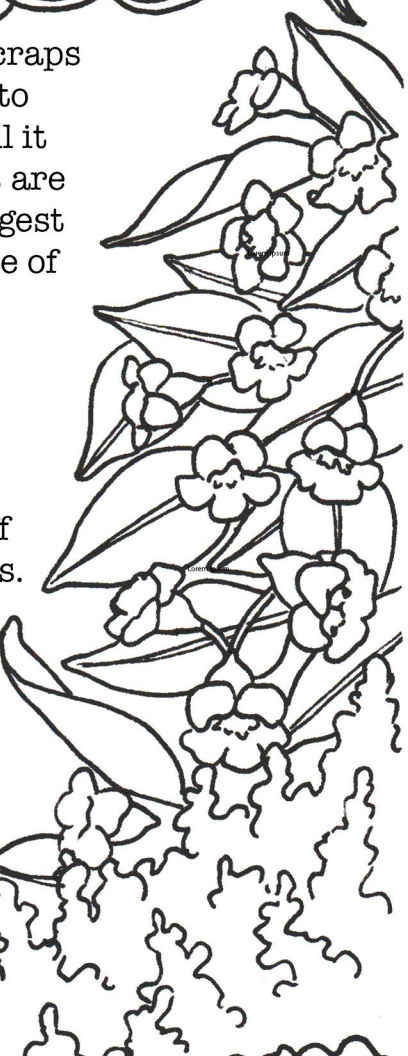


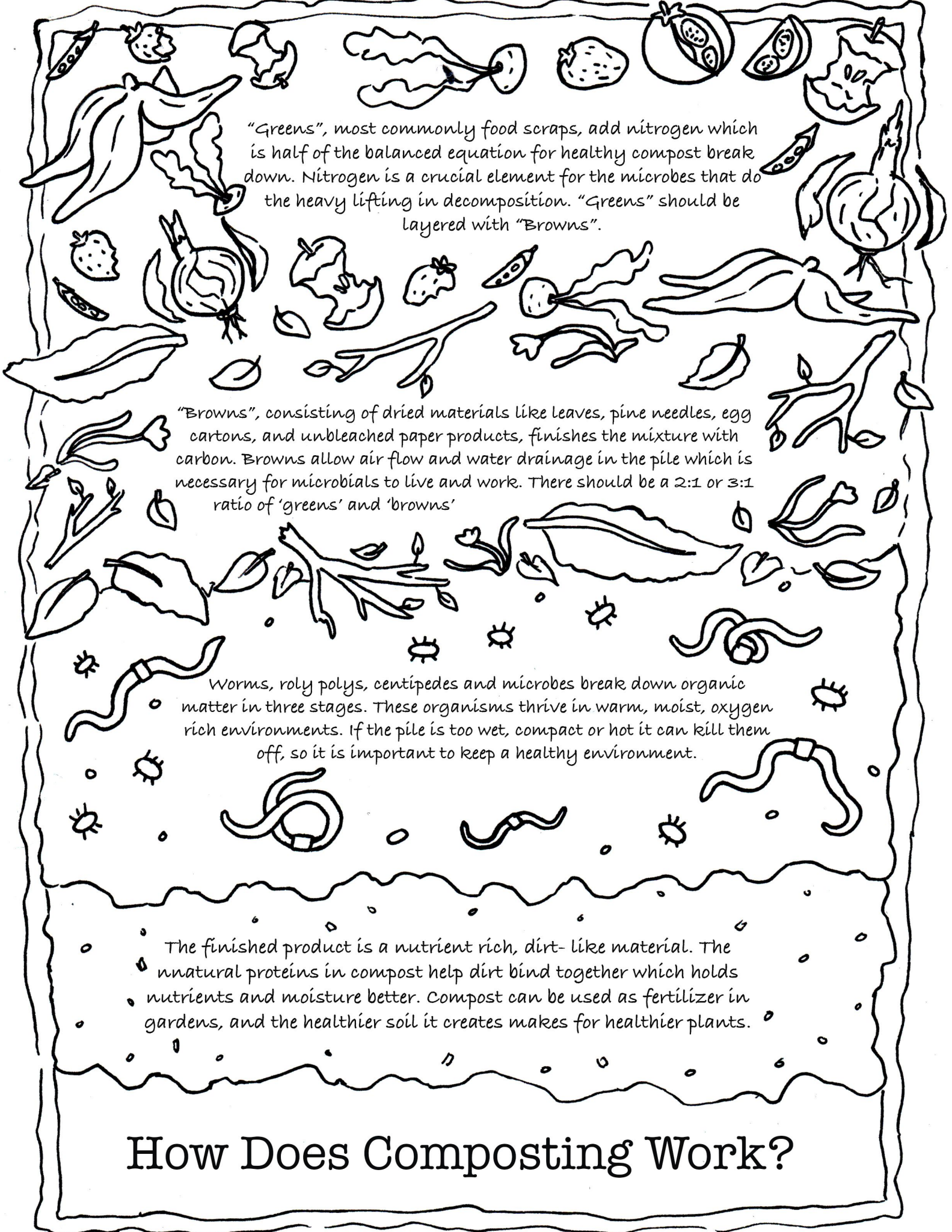
40% of residential waste is organic matter such as food scraps and lawn clippings. Millions of tons of this waste goes to landfills every year. When organic matter is in a landfill it breaks down anaerobically, meaning green house gasses are released into the atmosphere. Landfills are the third largest producer of methane, and add to the current global issue of climate change.

When organic matter is composted, it breaks down aerobically. Microorganisms process the waste without releasing methane and convert the nutrients from the decomposing matter into usable, nutrient rich, natural fertilizer. This fertilizer doesn't burn the soil and runoff into water systems polluting them like artificial fertilizers.

Because the organic matter that is decomposing is made of carbon and the microorganisms process it into nutrients, composting converts CO₂ from the atmosphere and stores it in the soil. This process, called carbon sequestration, is what trees do to reduce climate change, just in a different part of the carbon cycle.

Composting sequesters carbon, reduces green house gas emissions, and naturally fertilizes soil.





"Greens", most commonly food scraps, add nitrogen which is half of the balanced equation for healthy compost break down. Nitrogen is a crucial element for the microbes that do the heavy lifting in decomposition. "Greens" should be layered with "Browns".

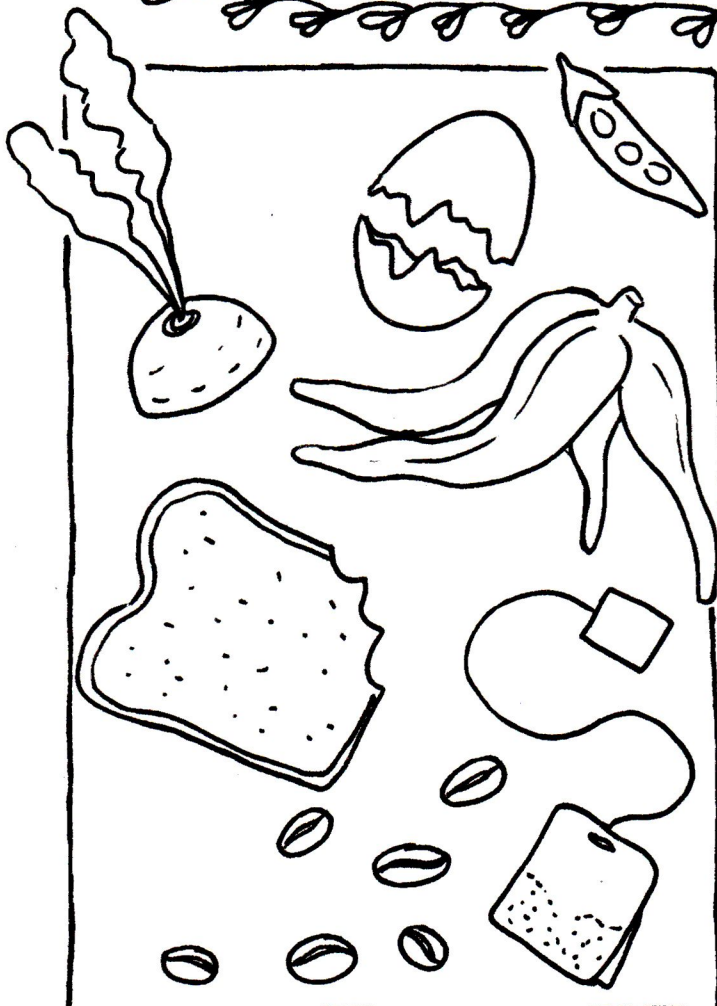
"Browns", consisting of dried materials like leaves, pine needles, egg cartons, and unbleached paper products, finishes the mixture with carbon. Browns allow air flow and water drainage in the pile which is necessary for microbials to live and work. There should be a 2:1 or 3:1 ratio of 'greens' and 'browns'

Worms, roly polys, centipedes and microbes break down organic matter in three stages. These organisms thrive in warm, moist, oxygen rich environments. If the pile is too wet, compact or hot it can kill them off, so it is important to keep a healthy environment.

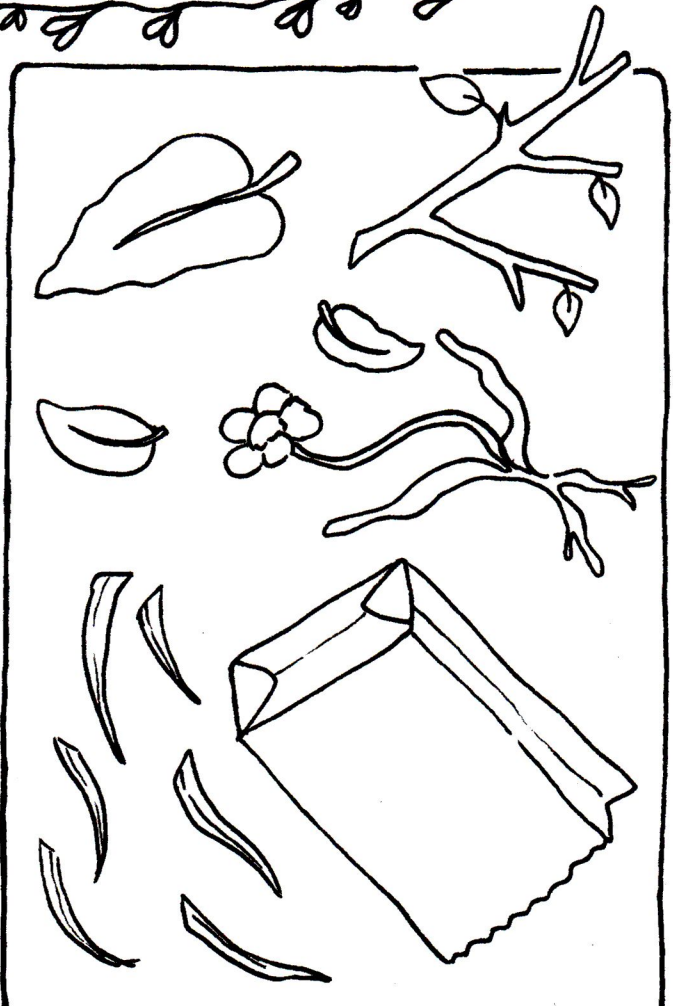
The finished product is a nutrient rich, dirt-like material. The natural proteins in compost help dirt bind together which holds nutrients and moisture better. Compost can be used as fertilizer in gardens, and the healthier soil it creates makes for healthier plants.

How Does Composting Work?

What to Compost and What Not to Compost

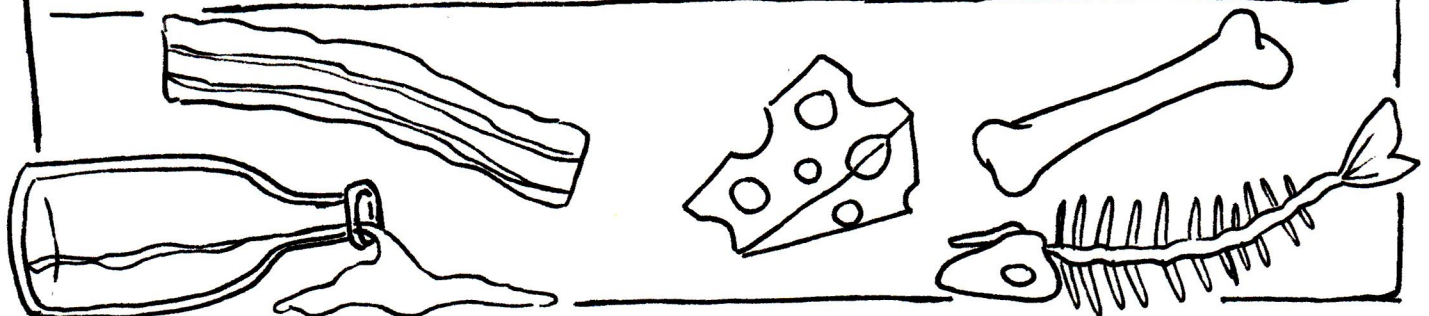


"Greens": food scraps and fresh lawn waste - including coffee grounds



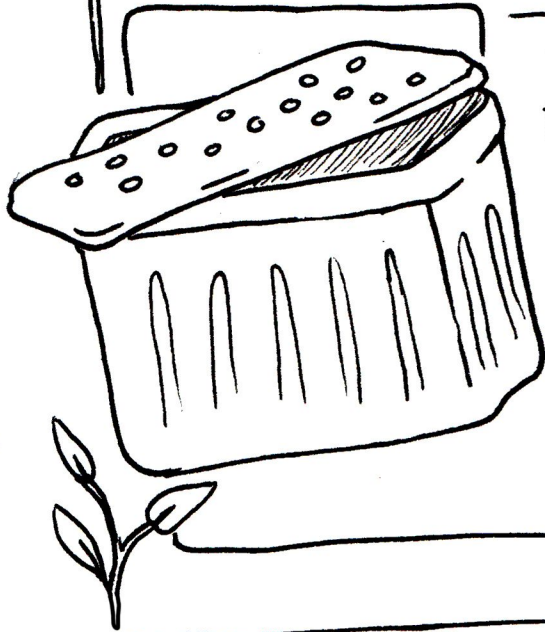
"Browns": dried lawn waste and unbleached paper products

"No - Goes" : meat and bones, dairy, oils and butters, charcoal and ash



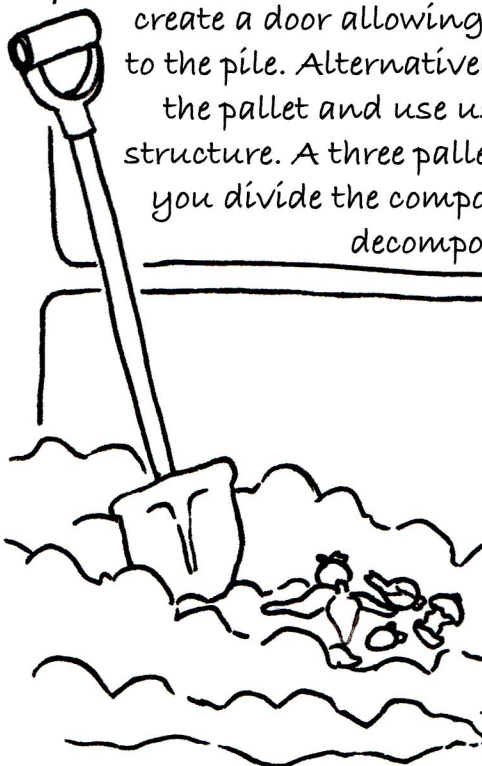
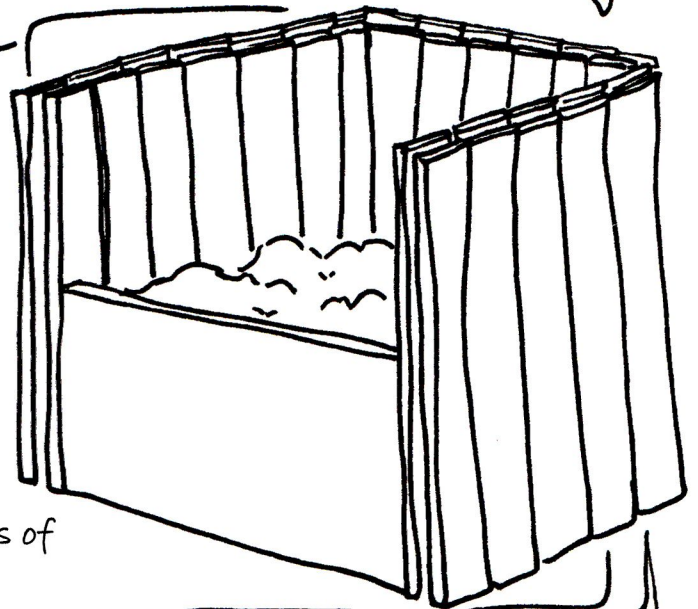
Composting at Home

DIY Compost Bins



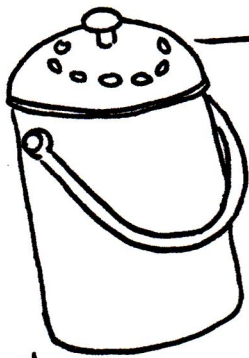
Plastic Bin Method: find a 24" or taller plastic bin with a lid. Drill 8 - 10 small holes in the lid to allow for aeration. Place a layer leaves or paper in the bottom, filling it $\frac{1}{6}$ of the way full. Add a layer of dirt until the container is $\frac{1}{2}$ full. Now it is ready to use for food scraps! Maintain by slightly stirring and moistening the mixture.

Wooden Pallet Box: find four, same sized wooden pallets that have been heat treated. Assemble the pallets into a box with corner brackets and screws. You can attach hinges to the front pallet to create a door allowing for easy access to the pile. Alternatively, you can cut the pallet and use use a half wall structure. A three pallet box set up lets you divide the compost into its stages of decomposition.



Trench Method: a simple and easy way to compost. Dig a 12" deep trench or hole where you plan on planting and place your food scraps in. Bury and allow time for decomposition. You can plan a rotation of trenches in your garden beds or plan them between rows of planting.

Indoor Composting Options

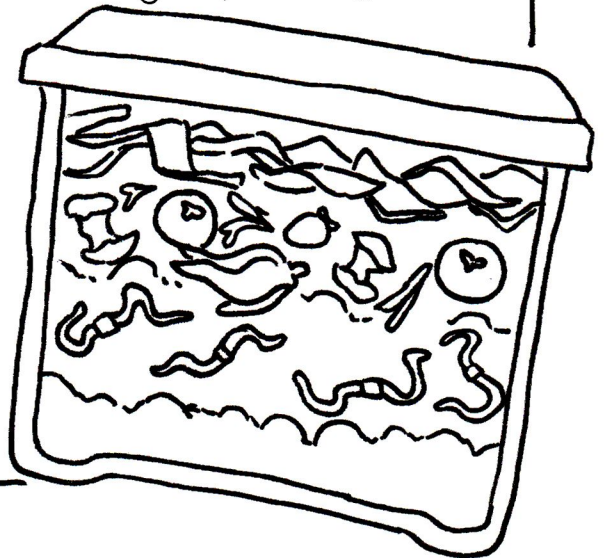


Stainless Steel Charcoal Filtered Container:

This can hold food scraps until you can transport them to a community garden or other outdoor compost pile. The charcoal filter keeps your home smell free and the stainless steel allows for easy cleaning.

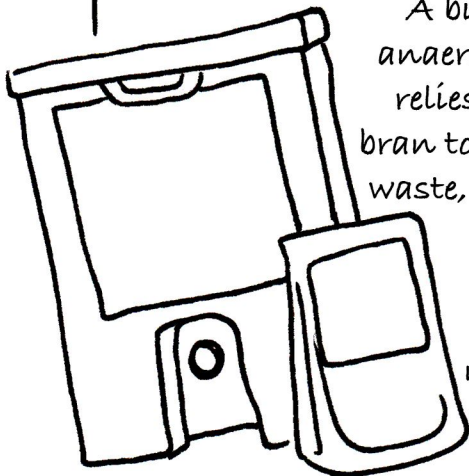
Worm Farm (a.k.a. vermicomposter):
You can purchase a vermicomposter, or make one out of two plastic bins. Nest the shorter box inside the taller one and have a lid for the top. Drill at least 10 holes in the lid and at the top edge of the bin and cover these with fine mesh screening. Fill with a bottom layer of bedding and

add "red wiggler" worms. Now just add your food scraps and maintain!



Bokashi Composting:
A bin that uses an anaerobic process that relies on inoculated bran to ferment kitchen waste, including meat and dairy, into a safe soil builder and nutrient-rich tea for your plants. Place food

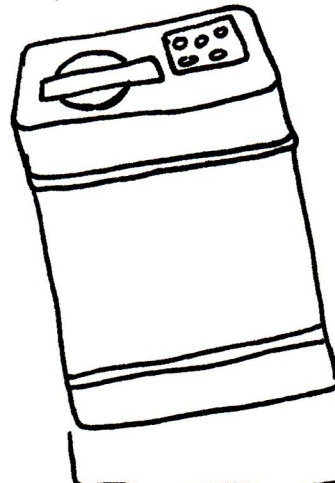
scraps into the Bokashi composter and add the provided bran mix, then set aside for 10 - 12 days. The resulting pickled mixture is "pre-compost" should be buried for 2 - 4 weeks until it is soil fertilizer.



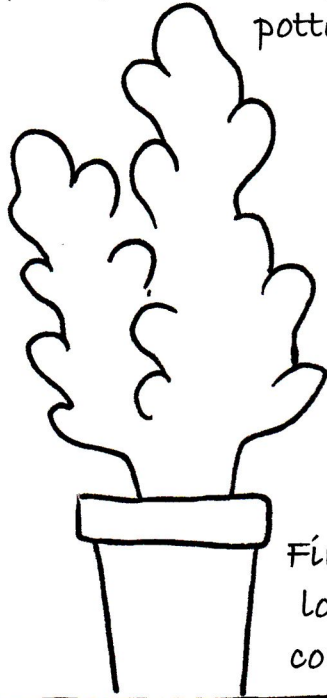
Electronic Kitchen Composter:

These units sanitize, dehydrate, and break down food waste in just a few hours. While these appliances are convenient and quick,

they are a pricier option that uses electricity, and doesn't replace genuine decomposition.



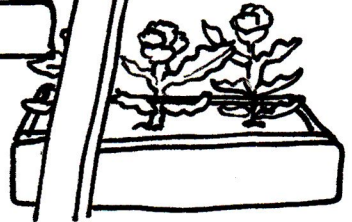
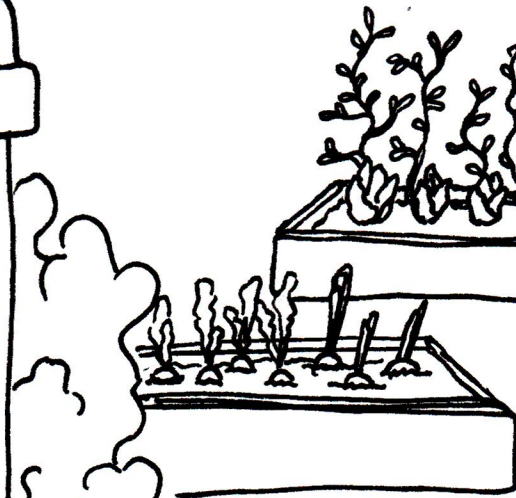
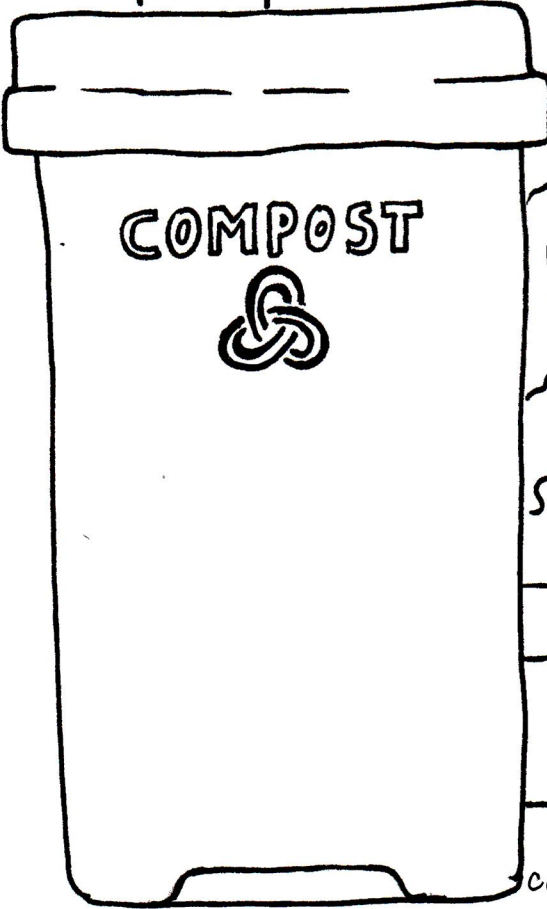
You can use your compost mixture in potted house plants.



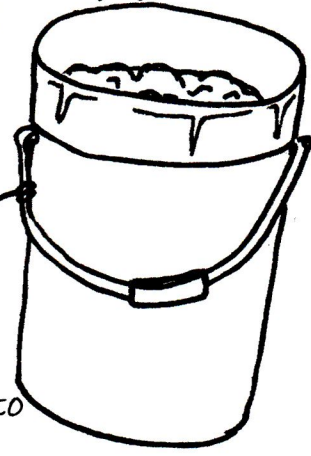
Donate compost to local farms, community gardens, or school garden projects.

Give your compost away to gardening friends, find someone online, or see if there is a local compost sharing group

Find out if your city or if a local organization has a composting pick up service,



Renegade neighborhood composting! Sprinkle it into public planters and parks.



What to do with your compost or scraps if you don't have a garden