



Composting

In Minnesota, it has been illegal to put yard waste into the garbage since the early 1990's, as it takes up too much valuable landfill space. A much better solution for yard waste is your compost bin!

The Chisago County Solid Waste Ordinance allows residents three composting options: home compost, self-haul to a compost facility, or hire a hauler to take it to a compost site. If you hire a hauler, the ordinance *prohibits* placing yard waste in black plastic bags; it must be placed in a compostable bag.

The landfill ban on yard waste prompted many municipalities and business to create compost sites to serve their residents and customers.

City compost sites open to respective city residents:

- **Chisago Lakes Joint Sewage Treatment Facility**, 31501 Lofton Avenue N, Chisago City. Managed by the City of Lindstrom, open to residents of the following cities. Open to some township residents for a fee, [City of Lindstrom Website](#).
 - ✓ **Chisago City**, Phone: 651-257-4162
 - ✓ **Lindstrom**, Phone: 651-257-0620
 - ✓ **Stacy**, Phone: 651-462-4486
 - ✓ **Wyoming**, Phone: 651-462-0575
- **North Branch Sewage Treatment Facility**, near the Industrial Park on Ash Street, Phone: 651-674-8113
- **Rush City**, Phone: 651-358-4743
- **Shafer**, Sewage Treatment Facility, Phone: 651-257-4726
- **Taylors Falls**, Sewage Treatment Facility, Phone: 651-465-5133

Compost sites open to all County residents for a fee:

- **ECSWC Transfer Station**, South side of Highway 95, east of Cambridge, Phone: 763-689-4056. Brush only for a fee. Open Friday 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. and Saturday 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
- **SRC Inc.**, 6320 East Viking Blvd, Wyoming. Phone: 651-462-5298. Open Monday – Friday from 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., and Saturday from 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon. [SRC Inc Website](#). Compost site and brush pile available for a fee.

How to Compost at Home

Home composting is **EASY** and requires **little time or money!** Finished compost makes a great soil enhancer for the garden, adds organic matter to loosen up clay soil, nutrients to sandy soil, and helps retain soil moisture around flowers, shrubs, and vegetables.



Compost bins can be found at your local home improvement or garden store, as well as online. Prices start around fifty dollars on up to several hundred dollars, depending on features. You can also build your own composter using lumber or wire fencing. Or you can use the “pile” method without a bin; your pile should be between 3' x 3' x 3' and 5'x 5 'x 5'.

Chisago County also runs an Annual Truckload Composter & Rainbarrel Sale in conjunction with Chisago County Soil and Water Conservation District. Ordering starts in February/March and pick-up is usually in May. Phone: 651-213-8923 for details.

For compost ingredients, always start with a layer of sticks ¼” or smaller in diameter to create an air layer on the bottom. On top of this, alternate layers of green matter over brown for a number of layers. You can also add a layer of dirt in order to get more microbes into the pile.

The **green layer** supplies the nitrogen and consists of fresh grass, green leaves, plant trimming. The **brown layer** supplies the carbon, and consists of dried grass or leaves, straw, wood chips or twigs no larger than ¼”.

You can also add in your kitchen food-wastes, i.e., such things as coffee grounds, tea bags, fruit, and veggie scraps! Keep a small bin on your kitchen counter, empty food prep and plate waste into pail and empty at least once a week into the compost bin in your backyard. Never mix meat or dairy into your compost in order to avoid critter problems. And don't mix in pet waste, diseased plants, weed seeds, or wood/coal ash into your compost as these items will cause problems.

The compost bin must be sited in a sunny location to keep it heated up. In order to keep the bacteria and fungi alive to “cook” your compost pile, make sure it stays moist by occasionally watering it. Turn the compost with a pitchfork one to two times a month to keep it composting evenly and to reduce odors. A summer pile will take 6 weeks to finish. You'll know it's done when the pile looks dark and crumbly and has a nice earthy smell to it.

Have fun using in your gardens and watch your plants grow!