

Although soil quality is the most important aspect of any garden, even if you don't possess rich ground, even poor soil can be improved to superior soil through the use of composting. As a matter of fact, anyone can create great soil by composting yard and kitchen scraps that would otherwise be squandered by disposing them in the trash bin.

Composting is a decomposition of organic materials that everyone already possesses. Therefore instead of wasting yard or kitchen scraps, I encourage everyone to place them together in a pile in the corner of the yard and let them work for you with very little effort on your part. Nothing is really quite so simple and yet produces such marvelous results.

Some people invest in costly closed containers or construct open bins, but we simply began placing shredded leaves, grass clippings, and kitchen scraps right on top of an area in our backyard many years ago and let God's laws of nature do their work. Our compost pile is approximately 20'x 4'x 5'.

Although turning the pile and keeping it moist speeds up the process, we rarely turn ours and never water it. Yet with so little effort it turns into what we call Black Gold because it is the most valuable element of our garden. There is always enough to work into our raised beds prior to sowing seeds or planting seedlings and for placing on top of the soil between multiple plantings.

The rich, sweet smelling compost provides the essential nutrients necessary for healthy plants that are slowly released over time, imparting a steady, consistent supply of nutrients. Compost also improves soil structure—oxygen levels, air exchange, drainage and water infiltration, textural and drainage properties. It incorporates more microscopic organisms into the soil, which in turn helps the plants assimilate nitrogen. It encourages worms, which also fertilize the soil while aerating it. This rich, well-balanced soil also improves the plants' immunity to diseases.