

7 Things to Do With Compost if You Don't Garden

If you're interested in composting, you might already know that it's a great thing to do for the planet. [Composting reduces landfill waste](#) and harmful emissions, plus it's great for the land. The big tragedy is that many of the things we throw away could be composted. According to the most recent information reported by the [EPA](#), roughly 25 percent of municipal solid waste in the United States is made up of materials that could be composted. That percentage combines food scraps and yard trimmings totaling **65 million tons** of unnecessary waste sent to the landfill each year!

In a perfect world, we'd each have space for our garden, the time to spend in it, and the green thumb to grow things in it. While these three elements may miraculously collide for you someday, rest assured that you don't need to have a garden to [start composting at home](#). But what do you do with all that nutrient-dense compost soil if you don't have a garden? Living in the city, many people we meet think composting isn't for them because they don't have space or interest for gardening. But don't throw your kitchen scraps out just yet: here are seven ways to use your compost to help the planet.

1. Use a Curbside Compost Service

Perhaps the easiest solution, if it's available to you, is to find a curbside compost service that will pick up your food scraps once a week, right at your house. According to [EarthShare](#), more than 150 U.S. cities now offer curbside composting as a public service, to go along with trash collection and recycling. However, if you're not one of the lucky ones, there are plenty of private compost pickup companies that will do this for you. From what I've seen, it costs around \$8/week and is incredibly easy — just throw your scraps in a bin provided and someone from the company will pick it up each week, replacing it with another bin.

2. Add It to Your Potted Plants

Unless you're producing a lot of soil quickly, you can probably use most of what you compost in your potted plants at home or in the office. In addition to the helpful nutrients, compost has good water retention properties. Just make sure your compost is completely decomposed (so it doesn't compete with the plants) before you begin.

For the best potting soil, you'll probably want to mix the compost with store-bought organic potting soil or some [homemade soil](#) combination of coarse sand, perlite, and vermiculite.

3. Make Friends with Your Gardening Neighbors

Whether you live in New York City or Montana, chances are one of your neighbors gardens or [grows their own food](#) — whether indoors or outdoors. Don't know any of your neighbors? Now's the perfect time to introduce yourself. What better way to make friends with your neighbors than to offer them some free, nutrient-rich miracle grow (not to be confused with Miracle-Gro) for their garden. Alternatively, if one of your neighbors is already an expert composter, you can see if they mind if you just add your scraps to their pile every few days or so.

4. Donate Your Compost to a School or Community Garden

Combine your love for your environment with your selfless altruism for the ultimate karmic boost. But really, this is a very simple way to get rid of your compost without wasting it. Plus, more and more schools are adding gardening programs to complement their food system curriculum. Call up a few local schools and see if they have a community garden. If you can't find one right away, try looking up schools participating in the [National Wildlife Federation Eco-Schools](#) program. Another awesome thing about community gardens is that they usually provide free or low-cost quality produce to low-income people in the community. It's a win-win-win.

5. See if a Local Farm Can Use It

Contribute to your local, sustainable agriculture scene by donating your compost to an organic farm in your area. In cities, urban farming programs are taking off, take for instance the 22 acres of community gardens in Portland, Oregon or the [62 urban farms in Chicago](#). So, you shouldn't have trouble finding a farm near you. Some farmers markets also serve as drop-off locations for compost or food scraps, which are then used for soil on the farms that sell produce there.

6. Give It Away on Craigslist

It may sound a tad eccentric, but you can sell or give away just about anything on Craigslist — NOT that you should, of course ([see what this man](#) did when his girlfriend wanted him to rehome his dog on Craigslist). But, we think it's safe to say that giving away your compost will usually turn out okay.

7. Spread the Love throughout Your Neighborhood

If all else fails, become the compost fairy. It's highly unlikely that you'll cause harm to a public park or a sidewalk tree by sprinkling a little compost into the soil, as long as you've been treating your compost well, and it's in its finished form. Now, we don't recommend adding your magic compost dust to anyone's private property or garden, but we think a little sprinkle will be fine for public land. In fact, recent studies show that a dusting of [compost helps lock up carbon](#) in the ground, creating fewer emissions.

Start Composting Today!

Composting is one part of a healthy food system that is vital to protecting our planet. According to the [Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences](#), the average household in the United States generates 650 lbs of compostable materials per year, and unfortunately, 60 percent of what we put in our landfills is organic matter that could have been composted. While nation-wide change doesn't happen overnight, you can make a difference in your home and your community today with one simple act. Check out the One Green Planet [guide to home composting](#) to learn the basics. We also suggest getting a small bin to keep on your kitchen countertop or under the sink to collect scraps while you're preparing your meal. That way, you won't be tempted to toss them in the trash. You can even use biodegradable bags to make carrying your compost out to the backyard bin that much easier. Now that you know there's no excuse not to compost, get started!

Source: OneGreenPlanet