

# Compost Troubleshooting

SYMPTOM	POSSIBLE CAUSE	SOLUTION / ALTERNATIVE
<b>Pile is damp and warm in the middle, but nowhere else</b>	Pile may be too small	Gather enough material to make a pile 3' high, 3' wide, and 3' long.
<b>Pile does not get hot</b>	If pile is moist and sweet smelling, in may not have enough nitrogen	Mix in fresh grass clippings, manure, blood meal, or other high nitrogen fertilizer.
	If pile is very wet—perhaps smells sour, it may not be getting enough air inside	Turn the pile. Mix in dry sawdust, straw, or stalks to improve drainage and air flow.
	Pile may be too small	Gather enough material to make a pile 3' high, 3' wide, and 3' long.
	Pile was built gradually over a few weeks or longer	Let it compost slowly. If materials are still fresh, turn and mix in fresh grass clippings, manure, blood meal, or other high nitrogen fertilizer.
<b>Pile is dry throughout</b>	Lack of water	Turn the pile and spray all materials with water.
<b>Pile smells like rotten eggs, vinegar or garbage</b>	Too wet, not enough oxygen	Turn the pile and mix in coarse dry materials such as leaves, straw, or corn stalks. Cover with plastic during rainy weather.
	Inappropriate materials such as food or pet waste in pile	Remove and dispose of inappropriate materials.
<b>Pile smells like ammonia</b>	Too much nitrogen	Turn the pile and mix in dry materials such as leaves, sawdust, shredded paper, straw, or corn stalks.
<b>Pile is attracting dogs, raccoons, rates, flies, or other pests</b>	Inappropriate materials such as food or pet waste in pile	Remove and dispose of inappropriate materials.
<b>Pile contains earwigs, slugs and other insects</b>	No problem	Slugs should be removed and destroyed so that their eggs are not spread in the garden.