

Consumer Horticulture/Master Gardener Program Services

The Wayne County Consumer Horticulture/Master Gardener Program offers services that provide information and recommendations to help people achieve their garden and home landscape goals.

Master Gardeners provide client-specific guidance on growing vegetables and ornamental plants, or maintaining their trees, shrubs, or lawns. This includes sustainable management practices, ways to improve soil, soil testing, composting guidance, and addressing problems from insect pests, plant diseases, or nuisance wildlife.

How to reach a **Master Gardener**:

- April – October: available Tuesday and Friday 9am-noon by phone or in-person. At other times, email or leave a voicemail message.
- November – March: available for messages via email, phone, or by appointment.
- Phone: (315) 331-8415 ext. 107
- Email: mgwayne@cornell.edu

Soil Testing: Test, don't Guess. **Master Gardeners** can advise on fee-based soil testing for nutrients and/or pH. Soil submission boxes, forms, and instructions can be picked up from our office.

Monthly Tips and Upcoming Events E-Newsletter: Receive our monthly newsletter with information on timely tips, plant pest/disease alerts, articles from Master Gardeners, upcoming events such as our Plant Sale in May, Great Gardens of Wayne County Tour, and Holiday Greens or other workshops. To receive our newsletter, email mgwayne@cornell.edu.

Master Gardener Facebook: Check out all the information we share on our Facebook!
<https://www.facebook.com/MasterGardenersWayne>

Horticultural Presentations: Master Gardeners offer presentations to groups of ten or more in Wayne County. For more information e-mail our presentation coordinator at: mgwaynepres@cornell.edu or call (315) 331-8415 ext. 107. Presentations include topics for adults and for youth.

The **Master Gardener Community/School Garden Liaison Project** is available to Community and School Gardens in Wayne County. Participants in this project receive guidance and troubleshooting for plant problems from our Master Gardeners. We also provide seeds and vegetable plants, when available, at no cost.



Helping You Put Knowledge to Work

Cornell Cooperative Extension is an employer and educator recognized for valuing AA/EEO, Protected Veterans, and Individuals with disabilities and provides equal program and employment opportunities.



Cold Composting - Lasagna Method

50 households participating in our recent Composting for Earth, Plants, and the Future project composted an average of 11.06 pounds of kitchen scraps weekly. If they continue at that rate for one year, 28,756 pounds of compostable kitchen scraps will be kept out of the landfill!

And that can really add up over time. For example, if 1000 households did the same (11.06 pounds each week for 1 year) that number would increase to 575,120 pounds! Just imagine how much larger those numbers would be if yard and garden waste was included or if even more people composted!

These materials make up 20 to 30 percent of all household wastes. Composting will reduce what you send to the landfill and using it can reduce the amount of pesticides and chemical fertilizers you use. Compost also improves your soil and the plants growing in it. If you have a garden, a lawn, trees, shrubs, or plant containers, you have a use for compost.

Composting Methods:

There are two basic methods of composting - cold composting and hot composting. The Lasagna Composting method described here falls under the passive no-turning “cold” composting method which requires minimal work, but you’ll have to wait several months for the finished product. Because this method doesn’t get hot enough to kill plant pathogens or weed seeds, you shouldn’t add them when you use this method. Hot composting requires more work and monitoring from you but you can add weed seeds and some diseased plants. Hot composting can produce usable compost in around 6-8 weeks.

Cold composting is a good way to begin and then consider trying hot composting if you so desire.

Getting Started with Cold Composting using the Lasagna Method:

The next page provides instructions for constructing your lasagna composting welded wire unit. The last page walks you through the composting process and a graphic with basic information is provided to help you get started. Below is a link to our video from Master Gardener Barb, that should answer many of your questions.

Video Link: Home Composting: How it All Works (14 min 48 sec):

https://reg.cce.cornell.edu/HomeCompostingHowitAllWorks_254

QUESTIONS: Please call or email our Master Gardeners for questions you have including general guidance, troubleshooting, or for information on the hot composting method. **(315) 331-8415 ext. 107 or email mgwayne@cornell.edu.**

Constructing Your Lasagna Composting Welded Wire Unit

Materials:

The unit:

Welded wire: 1" x 2" mesh

3' tall

14 gauge wire is ideal

10' of wire yields a 3' diameter bin 13' yields a 4' diameter bin.

Other options: wooden snow fence or pallets.

Ties: UV Zip Ties, wire (coated lasts longer), nylon string (cotton may rot)

Wire Cutters: Many hardware stores sell welded wire by the foot, so cutters are only needed if cutting from a roll.

- This type of garden or livestock fencing is made of rectangular, metal mesh.
- 1"x2" mesh works well. The larger, 2"x4" mesh works, but particles will fall through. A smaller, 1/2"x1" mesh size offers extra protection against animal pests.
- The smaller the mesh size, the more expensive the wire.
- 3' tall is ideal; shorter will not give your compost the mass it needs to heat up. A bin taller than 3' will be hard to reach inside and work in.
- 14 gauge is a medium duty thickness. Thinner wire (higher number) is more likely to bend and is therefore less sturdy.

Assembly:

- Roll into a cylinder, overlapping the ends by at least 6"
- Secure the cylinder closed with the ties of your choice - one near the top and one near the bottom on both sides where the wire overlaps
- Place the bin where you will use it, and position a stockpile of brown materials within reach
- That's it!

WARNING: The cut ends of fencing are SHARP! Use gloves or snip the ends close to a crosswire and file the edges. You can also bend longer ends down parallel to the crosswire, using pliers.

Source: Compost Education Program of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County with funding from the Tompkins County Department of Recycling and Materials Management. Edited 12/21/21 ljb

Lasagna Composting Process

Step 1: Set up your wire unit (you can also use wooden snow fence or pallets).

Step 2: Add a Base Layer – Larger stalky material such as corn stalks or sticks. Placed on the soil. This layer helps create air flow within the pile.

Step 3: Add 3 Parts Brown and make a “bowl” for the greens. The BROWNS ... are dry. They create air space within the pile and are the carbon that feeds the decomposers. They include **Shredded Newspaper, Coffee Filters, Napkins, Paper Plates, Cardboard, Pine Needles, Straw, Old Hay, Dry Dead Plants from the Garden, Brown Leaves from Trees**

Step 4: Add 1 part Green in the “bowl of browns”. The GREENS ... are usually wet or have been recently growing. They add moisture and help the browns decay more quickly. They include **Coffee Grounds, Tea Bags, Disease Free Trimmings from Plants, Hair, Grass Clippings, Egg Shells, Vegetable and Fruit Scraps**

As an example: for every 2 inch layer of greens, you should have a 6 inch layer of browns.

Step 5: Cover the greens with browns. **HINT:** no greens should show when you look at the bin.

Step 6: Make additions following steps 3-5 until the bin is full.

Step 7: You can leave the wire around the contents or remove it and begin filling it again.

