

## Composting – Running a Hot Hospital Heap

Listed below are 5 basic steps for firing up a hot compost heat using high-nitrogen meals as activators.

Choose a location at least 8 feet square, with easy access for flip-flopping a heap back and forth. Chop and moisten a pile of weathered material at least 12 cu. ft. in size. (A hip-high bin of weathered leaves or other compostable materials 40" across is good.) Use a hoe to break up big pieces and keep a hose or watering can handy to douse dry pockets.

Mix in fresh green materials equal to about 20% of the heap's mass, along with your chose activator. Sprinkle the powders or pellets onto the heap in layers, with 3" of compost between each heavy dusting of meal. Lightly spray the meal layers with water as you build the heap.

After 3 days, mix and turn the heap and add water if needed to moisten any dry pockets. Heat may come from parts of the heat buy not uniformly.

Mix and turn the heap every two to three days for two weeks, moving material from the outside to the center. In about a week the heat inside the heap should be quite high, evidenced by abundant steam and a shite, ash-like coating on some of the material. A thermometer should read above 130° from day 6 to day 12, and sometimes beyond. Don't skip any turnings during this crucial interval.

After two to three weeks, the heap will cool down except for isolated warm pockets. Continue to turn it every few days, adding water if needed to keep it moist. When heating ceases, cover the heap with a cloth, tarp or fabric weed barrier, and let it cure for at least a month. If free roots are likely to invade it from below, pile it atop a piece of weed barrier, burlap, or scrap carpeting the last time you turn it.

After a month remover the covering, sift and enjoy wonderful compost in a shorter period of time.