

Welcome to SEEDS Compost Petting Zoo!

Explore a few of the technologies available to small-scale composters!

By weight, over a third of what Michiganders send to landfills are organics, including leaves, food scraps, woody material, and paper. This results in greenhouse gas emissions and wasted resources that could instead be used to produce healthy soils and protect water quality.

Composting is a method of transforming organic waste streams into valuable soil amendments. Generally speaking, we mix “greens” like food scraps with “browns” like autumn leaves to create an air-rich environment that smells fresh and attracts all kinds of tiny creatures that help break down the material into humus. If your pile stinks, it probably isn’t getting enough air!

We hope that you develop a curiosity to learn even more about soil microbiology and practical ways you can be the change you want to see in the world. Visit each backyard-scale compost system on display and let us know what you think!



Thank you to the funders who made this project possible!



Do you want to learn more?

Interested in learning more about composting initiatives? Check out some online resources to help you get started!

COMPOSTING TERMS TO KNOW

ORGANICS

material that, given the proper conditions, will break down into soil

ANAEROBIC DECOMPOSITION

a process that occurs in an oxygen-deprived environment

AEROBIC DECOMPOSITION

a process that occurs in an oxygen-rich environment

METHANE

a potent greenhouse gas that is emitted by organics in landfills

MICROBIOME

tiny bacteria & fungi that are everywhere & on everything all the time

HUMUS

a dark, nutrient-rich matter formed by decomposition of organics

GREENS

materials rich in nitrogen, such as leaves, grass, and food scraps

BROWNS

woody materials rich in carbon, such as stalks, paper, & wood chips

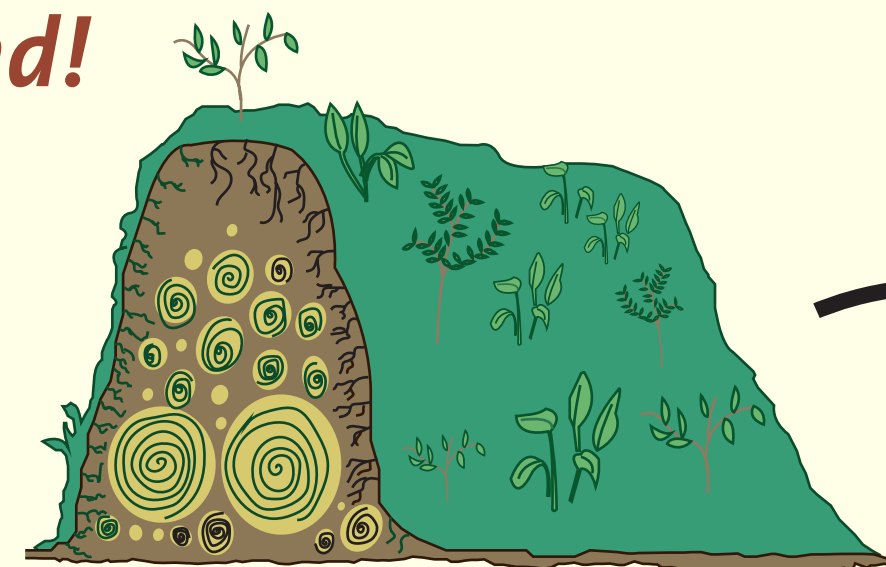
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First Stop: Hügelkultur Mound!

It gets its name from the German for ‘hill culture,’ and it’s exactly that — a hill!

Hügelkultur mounds utilize logs and branches with compost and pre-composted materials filling in the gaps and covering the mound. As the wood decomposes over several years, it will absorb water like a sponge, holding onto moisture for a long period of time. The surrounding compost and pre-composted materials help fuel the biological activity of underground microbes and mycelium.

Steep Hügelkultur mounds can be viable for 20 years or more and are great for flowers and climbing plants. While they differ in their decomposition process from traditional compost, Hügelkultur beds possess the ability to produce extremely healthy plants with minimal maintenance effort!



Hügelkultur bed after ONE month



Hügelkultur bed after ONE year



Hügelkultur bed after TWO years

DID YOU KNOW: This system is pronounced ‘hoogle-culture?’

What do I eat?



Where can you find me?



Difficulty level:

