

Compost Quiz

Are you ready to compost? Take this true/false quiz prepared by Cornell University. Answers are listed at the side of the page. No peeking!

Note: If you fail miserably, you'll still be ready to compost in no time by calling for our Free "Compost at Home" brochure. Just Call **(503) 588-5169**.

(Don't worry, we won't ask for your quiz score!)

1. Composting requires a lot of time and expensive equipment. **True False**
2. Yard wastes, such as leaves or grass clippings, and vegetable food waste, make up a relatively small proportion of Marion County's garbage and need not be considered for composting. **True False**
3. Moisture is necessary for the composting process to occur. **True False**
4. Disposal of solid waste is a problem that should be dealt with only through municipal government action. **True False**
5. If you are throwing away grass clippings, you are throwing away money. **True False**
6. To compost grass clippings, you should put them in a pile in a back corner of your yard. **True False**
7. To be a composter, you need to live out in the country, or at least in an area with plenty of yard space. **True False**
8. All kitchen scraps and garbage should be included in compost systems. **True False**
9. Diseased vegetable and flower plants should not be composted in typical home systems. **True False**
10. Weeds heavily laden with seeds should not be composted in typical home systems. **True False**
11. A tightly closed bin or enclosure is necessary for the production of good compost. **True False**
12. It is a good idea to use compost for starting flower and vegetable seedlings and transplants indoors. **True False**
13. For the composting process to occur most efficiently, special micro-organisms, hormones, and activators need to be added to the compost pile. **True False**

How did you do?

10-13 questions right: You're ready to be crowned compost king or queen! A true role model for your loyal subjects (your neighbors)!
7-10 questions right: You know your greens from your browns. Keep up the good work in an effort to stop the trash talk! **Less than 6 right:** Quick, call for your free "Compost at Home" brochure (503) 588-5169.

1. False. Composting can be as simple as raking a pile of leaves and letting it sit until it decomposes. At the other end of the spectrum are the commercial or municipal composting facilities.
2. False. Compostable yard and food waste make up about 25% of Marion County's garbage.
3. True. Composting occurs best at a moisture content of 50-60% (by weight). A simple way to check the moisture content of your compost mixture is to use the "squeeze test". When you squeeze a sample of your organic matter, you should be able to squeeze out a few drops of water, similar to that from a damp sponge.
4. False. Each of us can do our part to reduce the volume of solid waste that we generate. Most kitchen and yard wastes can be recycled naturally through the process of composting.
5. True. You can save time and money by letting short grass clippings fall back to the lawn rather than bagging and discarding them. Clippings break down rapidly and provide nitrogen.
6. False. Because fresh grass clippings are quite moist and high in nitrogen, they should be mixed with a drier, browner material such as autumn leaves, wood chips, or sawdust for composting.
7. False. Many people compost at the heart of inner cities, in community gardens or even on the roofs or balconies of schools and apartment buildings.
8. False. Although most food wastes can be composted, in small-scale compost systems you should avoid grease, fat, bones, fish, and meat scraps.
9. True. Diseased plants from the garden should not be used for compost if the compost is to be returned to the garden. Most diseases are killed by heating during compost formation, but unless the compost is turned frequently and allowed to remain unused for several years, some of these diseases organisms may be returned to the garden with the compost.
10. True. Although most plants and their seeds are killed during composting, some can be returned alive to the garden with the compost. Most weeds that have been pulled or cut before developing seeds can be composted without problem.
11. False. Building a compost pile is not an exact process. It can be as simple as making a pile of leaves and garden clippings, or it can involve building or buying a bin or enclosure.
12. False. Young seedlings and transplants are very susceptible to the disease micro-organisms that are found in most soils and composts.
13. False. The micro-organisms that are needed to break wastes into numbers in all garden soil.

Answers: