

# A Great Composting Recipe to Manage Waste in Our Community Bake for 6-12 Weeks

Brought to you by:

“The Dirty Rotters”

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# The Goal

- To encourage each person to contribute in making our tomorrows better!
- To inform how composting today can benefit the future
- To show how science and experiments can reveal the best methods to accomplish our goals

# 1. Location and Supplies

We chose a location near the west wall of the gym:

- Gets wet—bin is exposed to rainfall, faucet nearby
- Downwind
- Partly shaded, under tall trees
- Away from structures—4' from gym wall
- A variety of organic materials
- Tools for maintaining the pile (pitchfork, temperature probeware)

## 2. Build the Composter

- We used a bin instead of a pile for neatness, holding heat and moisture, and to keep pests away.
- Plans from *Sunset Western Garden*:  
4x4x4 structure enclosed on 3 sides, made with wooden pallets from a hardware store (Marc's dad). We used concrete blocks and stakes to hold the walls up.

# 3. Prepare Biomass

Started with 1 cubic yard (3x3x3) of materials

- Nitrogens: grass, kitchen waste
- Carbons: (chemical-free) leaves, twigs from landscaping crew, shredded newspapers for more air in the pile

# 4. Make the Pile

1. Soaked ground under pile.
2. Put layer of twigs, crumpled newspaper shreds in bottom for air drainage.
3. Layered pile, alternating 8" nitrogen and carbon layers.
4. Sprinkled each layer with water.
5. Ended with carbon layer.
6. Made shallow well at top of pile to catch rain.

# 5. Monitor the Pile

## First Week:

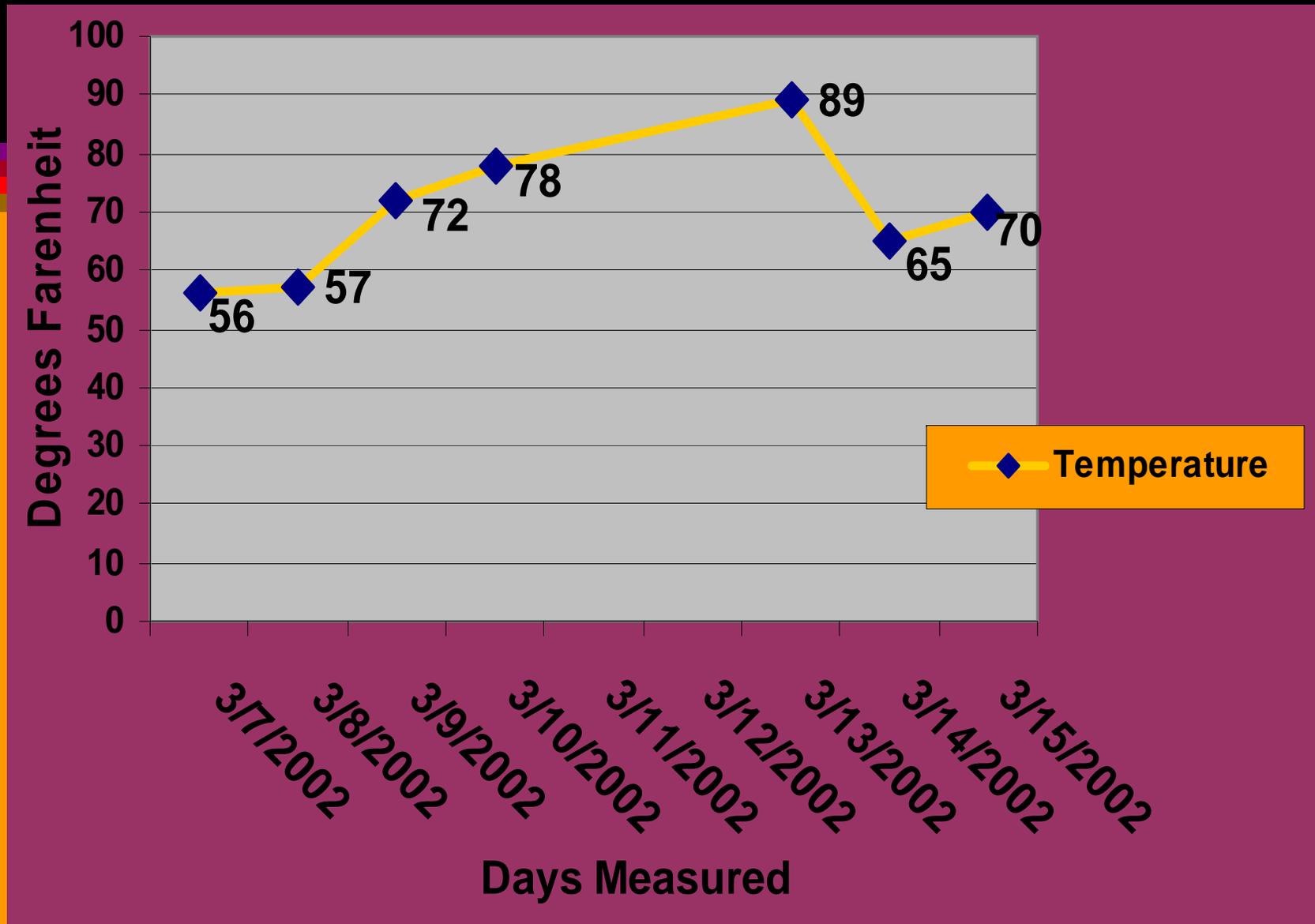
- At 6 days: 89° F, steaming
- Turned pile
- Checked moisture—Good, felt like a damp sponge
- No water added, added carbon (newspaper) and nitrogen (4 lb. vegetable scraps)

## Kept Monitoring:

- Temperature quits peaking with turning, until finally cool.
- When decomposed, compost has dark color, crumbly texture.

*At this rate we'll have a lot of compost in 8 weeks!*

# Dirty Rotters Temp Data Week 1 +



# The Implications

- Remove biomass from the waste stream—keep our land fills from filling up
- Create soil amendments for healthy plants
- Reduce the use of pesticides
- Restore contaminated soil
- Control erosion and storm water
- Save money on waste management

# Citations

- *Sunset Western Garden Book*. Menlo Park, CA: Sunset Publications, 1998.
- Cornell Composting, Science and Engineering: Compost Physics, [www.cfe.cornell.edu/compost/physics.html](http://www.cfe.cornell.edu/compost/physics.html)
- The Compost Resource Page, [www.oldgrowth.org/compost](http://www.oldgrowth.org/compost)