

# ANOTHER HERB HERBERT FACT SHEET

## SPECIAL INTEREST HERBS

# THE ART OF COMPOST

Borage, Chamomile, Comfrey,  
Yarrow



**I**NTRO  
What is Compost?  
Basically, it is a plant food and soil conditioner. It's an ideal way of recycling all your garden wastes and converting them into a form in which your garden can obtain nourishment and help improve the soil structure. Compost also increases your soil's water holding capacity, thereby reducing your water consumption.

The composting process is simple. Micro organisms are the driving force in the decomposing process of organic material. Anaerobic bacteria develops in the heap and heat up to begin the decomposing process. By turning the heap every few days, these organisms will flourish and accelerate the whole composting process. Almost any plant or vegetable waste can be converted into compost. Lawn clippings shredded prunings, large weeds, food scraps, tea leaves, hardwood sawdust, vegetable peelings and manure can all be used for compost. Avoid using pine sawdust (high in acid), stoloniferous weeds, gum leaves (unless shredded, as the oil prevents decay), plastics or infected foods. There are also several herbs that are beneficial in composting.



**D**ESCRPTION  
**BORAGE**  
(*Borago officinalis*)  
An annual herb with large, leafy, multiple branched, hollow stems. Borage makes a good compost addition due to its abundance of flowers, leaves and stems. Chop

roughly before adding this to the compost.

### CHAMOMILE GERMAN (*Matricaria recutita*)

German Chamomile is an annual herb to 75 cm with fine, green, feathery foliage. It is a marvelous compost additive as it helps to sweeten the mix and subdue odours.

It is high in calcium and assists the compost with its intake of nutrients from other plants.



### COMFREY

(*Symphytum officinale*)

A perennial herb with large coarse leaves arising from a thick, fleshy rootstock.

Comfrey leaves are an ideal compost herb in many ways. They have a high moisture content, promoting fast break down. The leaves are rich in vitamins B12, A and C, calcium, phosphorus and potassium, which it draws up from sub soils.

### YARROW

(*Achillea millefolium*)

A perennial herb to 90cm, Yarrow has fine, dark green, fern like leaves.

Yarrow contains a complexity of organic compounds which are beneficial to the production of soil bacteria. It acts as a catalyst for compost activation. 2 to 3 leaves are sufficient to add to the heap as a compost accelerator.



## HOW TO MAKE COMPOST

Composts can be made in a heap or a bin, depending on how much space you have.

To make a compost heap, layer your materials. mixture is just damp, not water logged, as this can slow down the heating process essential for compost. Air is vital for producing compost; lack of it causes the anaerobic bacteria to take over and produce sulphur compounds which give off a foul odour. Avoid this by turning over your heap occasionally until compost is ready. This should take 14-21 days.

Once your compost is stabilized, that is no longer generating heat, your mixture is ready to use.

Use your compost as soon as you can to avoid the loss of nutrients through seepage.



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