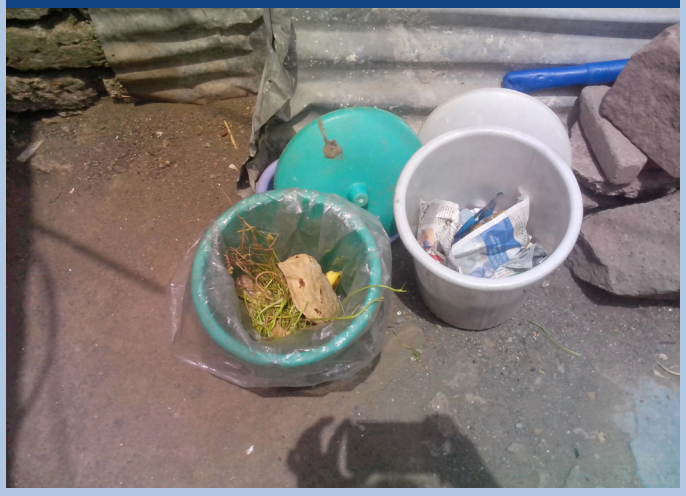
Do It Yourself: Composting Effectively

This flyer has been produced to sketch out a detailed procedure of composting, which one can take up in their own home.

Children learning composting

Lettuce that is growing with compost

Waste segregation is important before composting



Composting is the process of breaking down natural matter (food waste) using microorganisms and small insects, in the presence of air and water. The end product is called compost and is rich in readily usable plant nutrients, thus forming a part of healthy soil.

Composting is an alternative solution to burning waste, which causes air and soil pollution. The compost formed is beneficial for plants as it serves as a rich manure and natural fertilizer, reduces water usage through moisture retention in the waste, and overall, makes the plants more resistant to pests.

Conditions for creating compost:

1. Waste segregation prior to composting
2. Carbon from brown organic matter like dried leaves, sawdust, paper, etc.
3. Nitrogen from fruit and vegetable waste, coffee grounds, etc.
4. Oxygen, which is naturally present in the air.
5. Water, to maintain moisture.

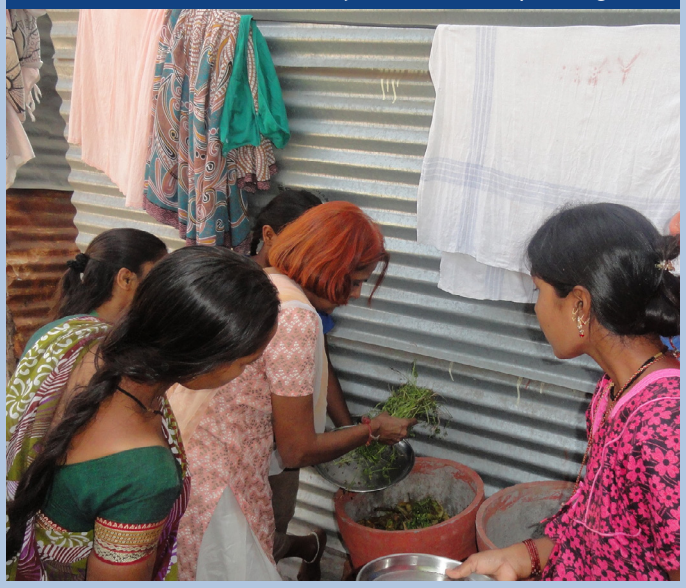
Materials needed to compost wet waste in a pot:

1. 7 Clay Pots with holes at the bottom (Clay pots are more preferable than cement pots)
2. Broken pieces of bricks
3. Soil (If available)
4. Vermi Biosanitizer (Culture)
5. Fibrous material (e.g. Dry leaves, coconut fiber, dry grass etc.)
6. Natural/Organic/Biodegradable/Wet Waste (approx. 6kgs/day from 6 families)
7. Seeds or Shrubs

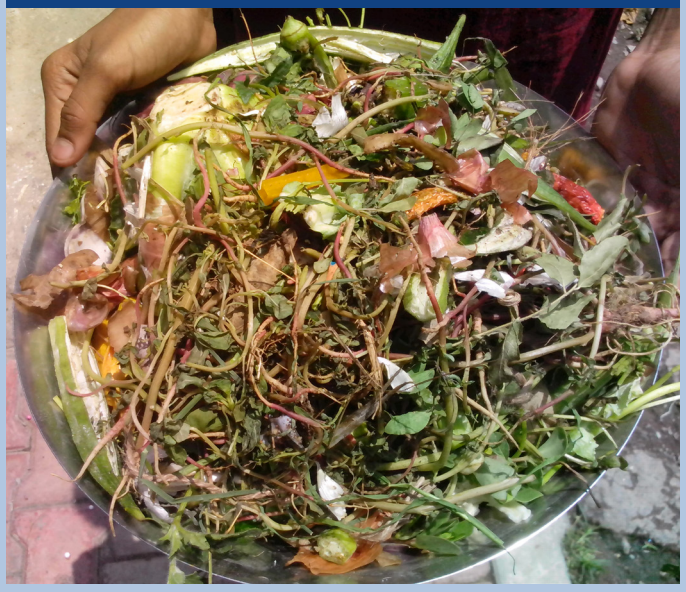
Steps for Solid Waste Management:

1. Select a pot that has a hole in the bottom
2. Put broken pieces of bricks in the pot to cover the hole at the bottom
3. Make a culture mixture by mixing 7 spoons of soil + 15 gm culture
4. Fill 1/4th of the pot with Fibrous material (e.g. Dry leaves, coconut fiber, dry grass etc.)
   - If the soil is available, put a 2" layer of it above the fibrous material
   - If there is no soil, fill half of the pot with fibrous material.
5. Plant an appropriate number of seeds in the soil or remove the plastic cover of a nursery plant and put it firmly in the fibrous material (This is optional)

A few women compost together



Fresh compost



A plant growing with compost, near a water source

6. Spread a maximum of a 3” layer of fresh natural waste over it
7. Sprinkle one spoon of the culture mixture over it
8. Sprinkle water over it

Essential tips to follow while composting:

1. Use vermin ++ bio sanitizer (culture) only once, while starting the project
2. Add a layer of wet waste once a week and ensure that it is spread evenly and not more than 3 inches thick
3. Sprinkle water on the plant once a day, preferably in the evening to prevent evaporation. This is done to keep the mass moist

Remedial Steps

• If the waste emits a foul smell, it means This can be fixed by decreasing the height of the waste layer along with providing plenty of water to the plant.

• If red ants are found near the plant, do not add poisonous chemicals like gamaxin powder to it. Instead, you can increase the quantity of water and sprinkle some turmeric powder on it to reduce the acidic conditions in the pot. This will automatically drive the ants away.

• You may find insects on the plant on a cloudy day or when the plant is in the fruit bearing or blooming stage. During this period, the plant is likely to lack energy. At this point, ants may appear to eat the small insects, which are on the plant and may hamper the process. Do not add or spray poisonous chemicals to the plant. Instead add waste, which has been soaked in water for 8 to 12 hours, around the stem of the plant.

A terrace garden maintained with compost