Troubleshooting

Questions?

Comments?
Common Problems

• Rodents in the Pile
  - Food scraps are being added to a cold pile and the compost bin is not rodent proof
  - Food scraps are not sufficiently buried
  - Meat and dairy products are being used
  - Rodent proof compost bin
    • add hardware cloth to bottom of biostack or earth machine
    • secure lid with weight (old concrete blocks)
  - Properly incorporate food scraps
  - No meat or dairy (egg shells are the exception)
Common Problems

• Odors
  - Pile is too wet
  - Oxygen has been depleted
  - Too many food scraps
  - Food not properly incorporated
  - Turn compost pile and add dry materials if too wet or too “green”
    • Leaves make an excellent dry “brown” material and also fluff up the pile
      - If leaves are wet, be sure to fluff them up before adding to the pile
  - Hold off adding food scraps for a while to let pile stabilize
  - Incorporate food scraps properly
Common Problems

• Pile Doesn’t Decompose
  - Pile too dry
  - Brown materials not adequately chopped
  - Not enough green materials
  - Too little patience
  - Turn pile
    • add chopped green materials as required
      - coffee grounds do wonders
    • add water as required
  • remove and chop large brown materials
• Add patience ..or.. invest in a hot pile
  • Remember that a cold pile will take up to two years to decompose
Remember a Hot Pile has

- Minimum Volume of a Cubic Yard
- Proper Carbon/Nitrogen Ratio of Around 30/1
- Chopped Materials
  - Oh the wonders of coffee grounds, grass clippings and leaves
- Wet Like a Wrung Out Sponge.
- Proper Turning to Ensure Adequate Oxygen
Common Problems

• Odors in worm bin
  - Too wet
  - Too many food scraps
  - *Meat and dairy products are being used*
  - Stir the contents of the lower layers
    - add dry shredded paper to absorb moisture
  - Reduce volume of food scraps being added to the pile
    - remember: never more than 1lb per square ft per week
  - *Never incorporate meat or dairy products*
    - *exception is crushed egg shells*
Common Problems

• Fruit Flies in Worm Bin
  - Food scraps not adequately covered
  - Fruit flies already present in food scraps before adding to pile
  - Add four or more inches of dry shredded paper over food scrap layer
    - keep adding more dry paper on regular basis since worms constantly digest the paper
  - Store food scraps in covered container before adding to the worm bin
  - Set a bowl of vinegar in the bin on top of the dry shredded paper
    - drowns the fruit flies
Common Problems

• Worms Die on Hot Days
  - Worm box over heated
    • greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit
    • most common with plastic bins
  - Bedding material dries out
  - No food scraps have been added for long periods of time (months)
  - Keep worm bin in shady area
  - Consider using a wood worm bin if adequate shade can’t be found.
  - Feed worms as required
    • check for moisture when feeding
      - too much moisture is usually the problem