

# SWING'S

C O F F E E R O A S T E R S



## *Fruitful Guide to Fertile Soil*

Swing's repackages our used coffee grounds for you to take home and put in your yard, flower bed, or compost pile. Coffee is a great component to any compost system (worms like it too), but as most things go, everything in moderation. Compost systems need a diverse diet in order to decay in a nutrient rich manner and produce something that will benefit your soil.

We've compiled some tips via the City of Alexandria to help you have a fruitful and thriving compost system.

### Fill your bin with a balanced mixture for best results: (1 to 3 rule)

- 1 part Green stuff (high in nitrogen) to activate the heat process in your compost. Perfect heat-generating materials include: young weeds (before they develop seeds); comfrey leaves; yarrow; chicken, rabbit or pigeon manure; grass cuttings; etc. Other green items that compost well include fruit and vegetables; fruit and vegetable scraps; **coffee grounds** and tea leaves (including tea bags - remove the staple if you wish); vegetable plant remains; plants.
- 3 parts Brown stuff (high in carbon) to serve as the "fiber" for your compost. Brown stuff includes fall (autumn) leaves; dead plants and weeds; sawdust; cardboard & cardboard tubes (from foil wraps etc); old flowers (including dried floral displays, minus plastic/foam attachments); old straw and hay; and small animal bedding.
- Other items that can be composted but you may not have thought of before: paper towels; paper bags; cotton clothing (torn up); egg shells; hair (human, dog, cat etc.) Use all these items in moderation.
- Air. It is possible to compost without air (anaerobically), but the process employs different bacteria and an anaerobic compost pile will take on a sour smell like vinegar. If you believe your compost pile needs more air, turn it, and consider adding more dry or brown stuff to open up the structure.
- Water. Your pile should be about as damp as a sponge that has been wrung out. Depending on your climate, you can add water directly or rely on the moisture that comes in with "green" items. A lid on the compost bin will help to keep moisture in. If a pile gets too much water in it, it might not get enough air.
- Soil or starter compost. This is not strictly necessary, but a light sprinkling garden soil between layers can help to introduce the correct bacteria to start the compost cycle a little more quickly. If you are pulling weeds, the soil left on the roots may be sufficient to serve this purpose. *Note: Burlap is also a great starting foundation to a new pile. We donate all of our used burlap bags, which are available for pick-up in our Del Ray location.*
- Layer or mix the different materials in your bin so that they come into contact with one another and so that you avoid any large clumps. Especially avoid compacting large quantities of green materials together.
- Turn your pile regularly, once every week or two. Mixing the pile in this way helps to keep air flowing inside the pile and encourages the growth of the right kind of bacteria and makes for a nice, sweet-smelling pile which will decompose faster.
- If you live in a colder climate that has a shorter composting season, be careful of adding slow rotting items such as tough branches, twigs and hedge clippings; wood ash; wood shavings and wood pruning. They can be composted, but you may want to compost them separately due to their longer break-down time.

