

ISAF EXTENSION / UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

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COMPOSTING DOG WASTE



Husky puppy

If you have dogs, you have poop. And how to dispose of that poop is an issue. Traditional composting theory and most agricultural extension offices will tell you that dog manure may not be added to compost bins. However, in a cooperative study between mushers and the Fairbanks Soil and Water Conservation District in Alaska, researchers are finding that with some special precautions, dog waste can be successfully composted.

It's important that you follow the compost recipe closely. The additive to the dog waste must be a carbon source such as sawdust. You can't just add dog manure to your regular compost bins or piles and expect to get good, safe results. You must also make sure the recipe gets to the temperature specified. A long-stemmed thermometer is useful for this. If you do not reach the "magic number" of 140 degrees F, you may not kill the pathogens present in the dog waste.

THE RECIPE

- 2 parts dog manure
- 1 part sawdust

Collect ingredients. When sufficient quantities have been accumulated, mix well and allow to cook to at least 140 degrees F, turning at least once a week. It usually takes 4-8 weeks to get a crumbly, dirt-like mixture.

WHERE TO USE THE COMPOST

PRACTICE SAFE COMPOSTING

When handling dog waste there is a risk of disease transmission, so always take these precautions:

- Always wash hands after handling dog waste.
- Confine dog waste to a specific area.
- Keep dog waste tools/clothing separate from other tools/clothing.
- Do not feed raw meat or fish.
- Use extra care around children.
- Don't use sawdust from pressure-treated wood.
- Consult a veterinarian about an appropriate parasite control program for your region.
- At this time, **do not apply compost containing dog waste to food crops.** (Studies are still ongoing as to whether dog manure compost that has reached 140 degrees F or more can be used safely on vegetable gardens.)

[SELF CONTAINED COMPOST BIN](#)

In order to better contain the potential odor and animal-attracting nature of an open compost bin, we developed this pattern for a [simple, turnable, covered compost bin](#) for our dog-waste composting.