



Green Minds

Lake Forest - Lake Bluff

PROBLEM	POSSIBLE CAUSES	SOLUTION
Rotten odor	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. excess moisture 2. compaction 3. too much nitrogen 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. turn pile and add dry material 2. turn pile 3. add high carbon material
Ammonia odor	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. too much nitrogen 2. grass clippings layer too thick 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. add high carbon material 2. turn pile, separate slimy grass
Low pile temp/ No decomposition	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. pile too small 2. pile too dry 3. poor aeration 4. lack of nitrogen 5. cold weather 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. make pile larger 2. water pile while turning it 3. Turn pile 4. Mix in nitrogen sources 5. Insulate pile with straw or wait
Raccoons or rats	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Presence of meat scraps fatty food waste, corn 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Remove meat scraps and do not add corn cobs or corn shucks 2. build animal-proof compost bin

- A well-built compost pile will not be smelly or offensive to nearby neighbors.
- You may see voles, mice and chipmunks coming and going near a bin. Not a worry, really
- Raccoons will check out your compost pile every night on their regular route. Be sure to cover pile if you don't want them going through it.
- If a small mammal tries to chew through your ventilation slits on the Earth Machine compost unit, spread Vaseline with cayenne powder mixed in it on the slits to deter them.
- When outside temperature is below freezing, the lid on the Earth Machine will become frozen shut. Just hold your bags of kitchen scraps in a bucket in the garage and wait for above freezing temperature. No chipmunks or mice are active in your garage during that kind of cold weather. This has worked for me for all the winters I have lived in this area.

Marion Carthwright