

Compost Making

Organic growers at some point will want to make their own compost using waste products from their own farms. (note: compost must follow instructions from Liz Ball in Smith and Hawken book.) To do this windrows alternating from vegetable matter, manure and soil are laid on top of each other and then stirred together again and again with the right amount of water. With in a few weeks of repeating the process one gets compost that is heated to a temperature that kills pathogens and seeds of weeds etc. One can then use compost to fertilize ground where crops are to grow.

To facilitate the process there are tools you can use depending on scale of compost making. For example consider a shredder designed to chop vegetable material to a size that will readily compost or rot down. For the smallest grower, for example one who uses a 2 wheel tractor a self powered Wallenstein shredder is right 9,13 or 24 HP is to be considered because they will have 10 X 10 inch shredder chute that is vertical and hence self feeding. The one offered by the walking tractor company is too small and bridges easily. For those who use a 4 wheel tractor, Wallenstein offers the same unit but saves maintaining another engine.



When the area to be collected from is large, consider a Falc Jolly or Peruzzo or other mower/collector. These mow grass, leaves and pruning's and collect them in attached hopper. These are periodically dumped on the compost pile. These different models dump on ground or 6 ft. off ground, which model will depend on height of compost pile and distance between collection site and compost pile.



If distance from collection site is great and compost pile is large consider using a transporter with dumping bed that dumps left or right side well suited to long windrows. Also carries manure and dumps it and soil to make high quality compost.



If you do not want a self powered unit consider using a trailer that dumps left, right or rear to fit compost pile or windrow. Hauls manure and soil better than using bucket in front of tractor.



Having assembled parts of compost windrow one needs to mix compost material. Ideally components of compost pile are turned every day or so, ideally you can use a true compost turner such as Mighty Mike by hooking up tractor for just less than hour allows you to run down turning windrow every day. If you cannot justify a Mighty Mike compost turner you might consider using your spader to aerate your compost pile, assuming you can safely run your tractor on your compost pile—it would need to be lower and wider than using the Mighty Mike.

