

Being a Turner with Back2Earth

Being a turner is an easy way for a little effort to go a long way. The chemistry of compost is such that it needs to be “mixed up” about once a week to keep a number of factors balanced. Doing it takes about 10 - 15 minutes, and consists of opening up the bin and using the provided pitchfork to move the material. There should be around 1 turner signed up for every 5 participants so the coverage can be rotated and shared.

How to Turn

“Inside-Out”: A compost pile has 2 sides- the inside, and the outside, and the goal is to try to get them to switch. There is no exact way to do it, but one easy method is to dig one corner onto the top of another, then use that free space like a slider puzzle to shift material around in sections from the inside to the edges, and from edge to inside.

Breaking up: it’s good to “toss” and jostle the material around a bit as it’s moved to loosen up anything that has clumped together. This is just as important as turning inside-out, because each clump is essentially its own “inside” that needs to be broken out.

When to Turn

Rotation: The task needs to be performed weekly and will be rotated between turners. The exact schedule can be arranged by the turners and adjusted as participation changes.

Turning window: To ensure that a roughly equal amount of time passes between each turn, a ‘turning day’ should be determined. A +/- one day window is fine, but any more will be too inconsistent for a reliable result. If no other window is arranged, Fri/Sat/Sun is the default.

Role Considerations

Communication: Be sure to be in touch with your site lead and other turners about any problems that come up while turning. Damaged equipment, or problems in the compost should be indicated to make sure that each is corrected.

Absence Coverage: If you are unable to turn your given week, be sure to reach out to the other turners to try to set up a replacement. If no one is available, be sure to let the site lead know.

Move Out/End of Participation: Once you know you will no longer be serving as a turner, be sure to give the site lead notice so that the site can adapt and continue to operate smoothly.

Going the extra Mile

Since you will be seeing the compost up close, you will have the best opportunity to make a quick inspection to ensure everything is looking alright. Keeping an eye on the following items and communicating with the site lead will be a tremendous help in ensuring a successful result:

- Compost Contamination (non-compostable or prohibited items)
- Signs of pests (burrowing or chewing)
- Pile imbalance (stinky, sludgy, or crumbly)
- Equipment neglect (missing/damaged tools, locks not secured)

B2E