

Measuring Compost Moisture Content

1. Take a representative sample of the composting material.
 - Make sure that the sample is representative of the material in the pile, ie. Take the sample just after mixing or turning.
 - Use a larger tray for compost containing larger particles.
2. Weigh the compost sample and tray on a small scale. Record the weight.



3. Place the sample in a toaster oven set to 105-110 C (220-230 F) for 24 hours.



4. Remove the sample from the oven after 24 hours and weigh on the postal scale. Record the weight. Empty the contents of the tray and weigh the tray. Record the weight of the empty tray.



5. Calculate the moisture content using the formula:

$$\frac{\text{Wet weight} - \text{dry weight}}{\text{Wet weight} - \text{empty container}} \times 100\%$$

Example:

$$\frac{249 \text{ g} - 133 \text{ g}}{249 \text{ g} - 14 \text{ g}} = \frac{116 \text{ g}}{235 \text{ g}} \times 100\% = 49\%$$



Recommended moisture content for optimal composting is 45-65%. Some recommendations suggest a maximum of 60% for better odour control.