

Composting Road Kill



Select Site

1. Select site that is well drained and not subject to flooding. Depending on site topography, keep piles away from homes and businesses and from water courses, sinkholes, seasonal seeps or other landscape features that indicate the area is hydrologically sensitive.

Good Housekeeping

2. Site Cleanliness is an important aspect of composting; it deters scavengers, helps control odors and keeps good neighbor relations.

Pile Building Prerequisites

3. Start with a hard surface made of asphalt, concrete or millings. Obtain a sufficient supply of fresh wood chips. Buy a compost thermometer. Have loader nearby. NYSDOT personnel should contact their Maintenance Environmental Coordinator.

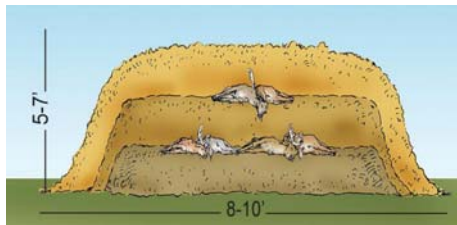


Prepare Base

4. Lay a 24-inch bed of bulky, absorbent organic material; chips from tree chipping operations 2-inches or larger work well. Ensure the base is large enough to allow for a 2-foot clearance around the carcasses on all sides. To promote air flow, do not drive on the compost bed or pile.

Build Pile

5. Lay animal(s) in the center of the bed. Lance the stomach if the carcass is bloated. Lancing to avoid bloating and possible explosion of the body cavity is optional. Explosive release of gases can result in odor problems and it will blow the cover material off the composting carcass. Place animals as shown. When adding a new animal to the windrow, pull back some of the wood chips that are covering the previously placed deer and place the new animal near the others. Small animals should be layered similar to stair steps.

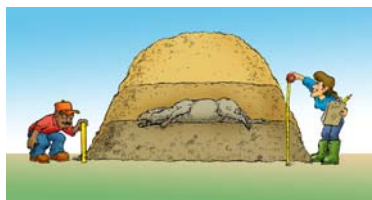
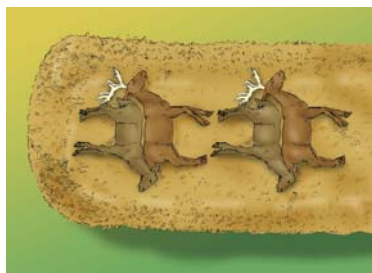


Layer Animals

6. With animals under 150 pounds, there can be 2 layers of animals with a 12-inch layer of wood chips in between. This seems to create conditions where the carbon and nitrogen levels are in balance and provides the mass needed to reach thermophilic temperatures. Animals over 150 pounds will be difficult to layer and they have enough mass to compost when enveloped in one layer of woodchips. Cover with 24-inches of wood chips. The finished height should be 5-7 feet.

Why Compost Road Kill?

- ◆ Pathogen kill occurs in thermophilic composts
- ◆ Can be done any time of the year, even when the ground is frozen
- ◆ Can be done using common highway equipment and readily available materials
- ◆ Relatively odor free
- ◆ All sizes of animals can be composted
- ◆ Relatively low labor and management needed
- ◆ Low cost



Large Animals

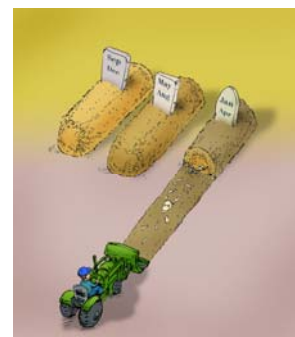
7. With large animals (over 150 pounds or too heavy to lift to a second layer), cover a single layer of carcasses with 24-inches of wood chips.

Check Temperatures

8. Check temperatures to be sure the composting process is active. If deer are not frozen and the pile built properly, the temperatures should reach 120°-150° F (49°-65° C) in the first few days.

Let Sit for 4 to 6 Months

9. Let sit for 4-6 months after the last carcass has been added and the pile gets hot (110° F), then check to see if the animals are degraded. Keep track of the pile start date and when the last animal is added. If the compost process worked well you should find clean bones and some hair.



Reuse the Material

10. Reuse the material as a bed for additional carcass compost piles.

Use Compost on Roadsides

11. Allow the material to age for a year from when the pile got hot. After a year, remove large bones and use the compost in roadside maintenance or establishment projects. The bones can be used in the base of the next pile.



Don't drive on the base or the pile.

