

# Composting

## Chapter 5

### Answers to review questions

1) Air Is necessary for a compost pile to work. Why?

To encourage aerobic organisms (p. 106)

2) What happens In a compost pile if there is no air present?

Without air, the compost pile kills aerobic organisms and encourages the growth of anaerobic ones. The compost pile becomes a smelly, slimy mess (pp. 106, 108).

3. ' A good compost pile contains a variety of raw materials. Define each of the following and give examples:

- ' *Energy materials* contain a lot of energy for microorganisms. Examples include grass clippings, manure, garden trimmings, and fruit and vegetable waste (p. 105).
- *Bulking agents* are low in nitrogen, energy, and moisture. Examples include wood chips, corn stalks, sawdust, grass hay, and straw (p. 105).
- *Balanced raw materials* contain a balance of energy and bulk. Examples include leaves, high-quality hay (ground up), ground-up tree and shrub trimmings, horse manure with bedding, and mixtures of bulking and energy materials (p. 105).

4. 'Why Is particle size important In a compost pile?

Microorganisms act on the surface of the compost material; the smaller the size, the more surface area there is to act on (p. 105).

5) Why does compost need to "cure" before being applied to a garden?

Curing affects the availability of nitrogen and the microbial activity of compost. Uncured compost can injure plants, especially when used with potting soil or to start new seeds (pp. 107-108).

6. What are some problems with using manure In a compost pile?

Composting might not kill all pathogens found in manure. The greatest risk of contamination is to root crops, such as potatoes and carrots, and leafy vegetables such as lettuce (pp. 50, 109).

7) What are some kinds of manure that never should be used In a compost pile?

Cat, dog, and pig manure (pp. 50, 109)

# Vegetable Gardening

# Chapter 7

## Answers- to review questions

1) What factors should you consider when choosing a garden site?

- Soil (*p. 125*)
- Exposure to sunlight (*pp. 125-126*)
- Slope (*p. 125*)
- Microclimates, e.g.; low, cold spots (*p. 125*) • Exposure to wind (*p. 125*)
- Presence of trees and shrubs (*p. 125*)
- Convenience to the house and to a water supply (*p. 125*)
- Previous cropping history (*p. 126*)
- Presence of roads (*p. 126*)
- Presence of soil pollutants (*p. 126*)

2) Which factor is most important for seed germination in the spring--soil temperature or air temperature?

Soil temperature has a greater influence on seed germination, and generally rises more slowly than air temperature (*p. 134*).

3) In cold situations (e.g., spring and fall), what can you do to extend the growing season?

- Start plants indoors (*pp. 133-134*).
- Use cold frames or hotbeds (*pp. 157-159*).
- Plant in raised beds (*pp. 145-146*).
- Cover plants with cloches or row covers (*pp. 159-160*).
- Cover the soil with plastic mulch.

4) Suppose you plant the same crop in a sandy soil, a loam soil, and a clay soil, and apply the same amount of water at each irrigation. Which site would need to be watered more often? The one on sandy soil because it has less water-holding capacity (*pp. 38, 141*).

5) What is a good way to build soil fertility while protecting your soil from leaching and compaction during the winter rainy season?

Grow winter cover crops (*pp. 162-163*).