

gardening

Rod Brown

st of six articles.

The maple tree in your front yard that you blessed all summer long for its cool shade probably by now is guilty of dumping six garbage bags full of dead leaves all over your carefully tended lawn

and gate logs full of nead way.

You have raked until the lawn fairly shines. The rather intimidating pile has been jumped in the required number of times by the kids who are no longer interested.

Because you can't burn the wretched refuse in either Wayne or Oakland counties anymore, there are two courses open to you. 1)You can bag the mess neadly for the trashman; or 2)You can spread the pile back out, run over it a few times with the lawnnower and start your own compost heap for next spring. spring. Why compost?

A soil rich in humus or decaying or-ganic matter is the perfect growing medium for all plants, yielding natural food to the plants, holding water, keep-ing the soil crumbly so roots can grow easily and allowing necessary air into the soil.

All of these are especially pertinent to the clay we laughingly call soil — clay left over from when they drained the malarial swamps your subdivision

now stands on in Farmington and parts

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It is the acids produced by this decaying organic matter which make soil minerals soluble and, thus, available to plants. The soil microorganisms which produce humic acids need new organic matter to feed on from time to time. Compost, which is partially decayed organic matter, is just what these microorganisms like best.

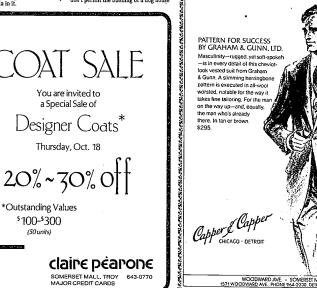
Create a compost for free fertilizer HEAT IS a must — 140 degrees F. Not only does this temperature provide the steambath environment accessary for the bacteria, but it will also kill very not the other hand, drives out drowns the pile and washes out on its drowns the pile and the pile of the pile — and the pile and the pile of the word of the pile of the pile and the pile of the word of the pile of

Keep the pile damp "like a moist sponge" - too little moistures slows decomposition and prevents the pile from heating up. Its little microrganisms need a steamy environment. Too much moisture, on the other hand, drives out: air, drowns the pile and washes out nutrients.

Nitrogen also is neccesary for the heating up process. Fresh horse manure, kitchen garbage (egg shells, coffee grounds, citrus triad — not bones, cardboard, and tin cans), blood meal and grass clippings are all high in readily available nitrogen.

You can how commercial starters that contain the required bacteria— the little buggers responsible for eating the pile into compost in the first place— or you can toos in a few spadefuls of topsoil from your garden. It already has the bacteria in it.

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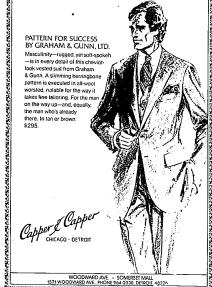
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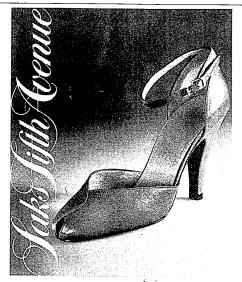
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