Composting is... the controlled decomposition of raw organic materials (such as food scraps and dry leaves) that creates compost, a valuable soil amendment. This process is driven by fungi, bacteria, and other microorganisms.

There are 5 key ingredients:

1. **Water**
   Like us, composting microbes need water to thrive! They require a thin layer of water around materials in the compost pile in order to be active.

2. **Air**
   Composting is an aerobic process—the microbes need air to live!
   Air flow in the pile can be maintained by regular re-mixing or use of a special fan.

3. **"Greens"**
   These are materials relatively high in nitrogen, providing microbes with protein to grow and reproduce.

4. **"Browns"**
   These are materials relatively high in carbon, providing microbes with carbohydrates for energy.
   Bulky browns help make space for air in the pile.

5. **Living Organisms**
   **Microbes**
   Microorganisms, or microbes, are the powerhouse of your compost pile. Bacteria are the most numerous and diverse, and consume a wide variety of materials. Actinobacteria and fungi both work to break down leaves, stems, nut shells, bark, and wood.
   **Macroorganisms**
   These larger organisms eat microbes and shred materials into smaller pieces.

Lots of ways and sizes!

Learn more about how to compost: [IISR Institute for Local Self-Reliance](https://www.iisr.org)