**Select a spot**
Food waste can be buried in empty spots in vegetable and flower gardens, or in holes dug around the drip line of trees and shrubs. The drip line is below the ends of branches, where feeder roots are connected.

**Dig a hole**
Use a shovel or post hole digger to make a hole at least a foot deep.

**Add food scraps**
Add 3 to 4 inches of food scraps at the bottom of the hole. Use a shovel to chop and mix the wastes into the soil to speed composting.

**Cover with soil**
Cover food scraps with at least 8 inches of soil to prevent rodents and pets from digging them up.

**Plant**
Buried food scraps may take from two to six months to decompose, depending on soil temperature, moisture, worm population and what is buried. In good garden soil, leafy greens will break down in weeks while citrus peels may persist for several months. If the soil is loose and fertile, annual plants may be planted on top of burial areas immediately. If the soil requires tilling before planting, wait a month or more, then check burial areas before tilling to make sure that undecomposed food does not come to the surface.

**Do Bury**
- Vegetable scraps
- Grains and pasta
- Fruit rinds and peels
- Breads and cereals
- Coffee grounds and filters
- Tea bags
- Egg shells
- Paper napkins

**Do Not Bury**
- Meat
- Fish and poultry
- Cheese
- Oily foods
- Butter
- Other animal products

Learn more about composting on-line at www.compostsantacruzcounty.org