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Build a Composter to Dispose of Unwanted Deer Parts

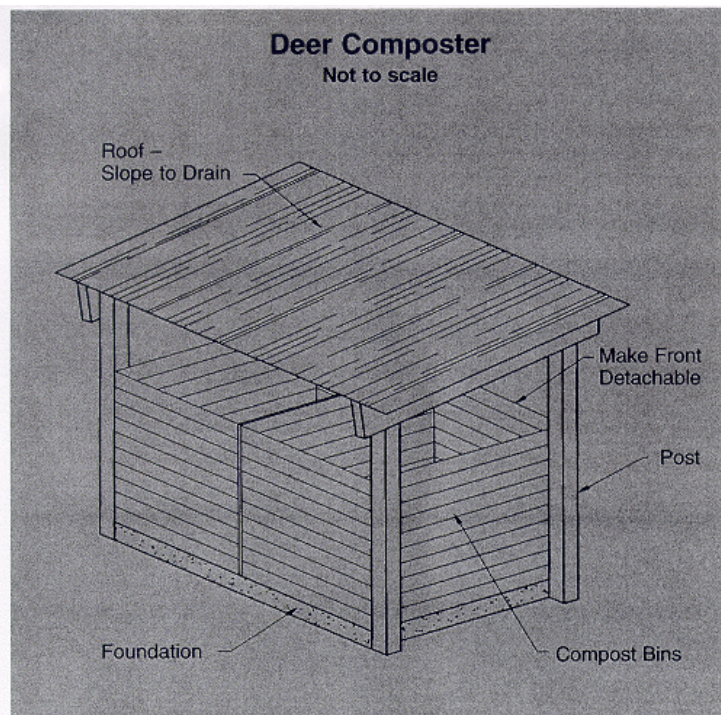
By Dr. H. Lee Stribling, Wildlife Extension Specialist

Alabama hunters harvest about half a million (that's M-I-L-L-I-O-N folks) deer every year. They are enthusiastic about their sport and often share their love of hunting with their children and grandchildren. Most hunters are conscientious about proper field dressing and disposal of deer wastes. But some clubs and landowners may dispose of the remains in inappropriate locations such as by the roadside, in an old well, or in a ditch or stream. One group disposed of them in a wetland behind the club-house. Improper disposal can pollute the water and cause serious health problems. Now there is a very simple, low cost, environmentally sound solution to this problem **B** composting! For a minimal cost, a hunting club can build a composter to accommodate waste from about 40 deer per year. It requires very little work, is environmentally sound, has no odor, and, significantly, the composted material can be used as fertilizer on next season's wildlife openings or home gardens. The process is simple.

1. Build foundation **C** an 8' x 10' concrete or firmly packed gravel pad.
2. Construct a 5' high x 8' deep x 10' wide cell on the foundation. Partition to allow one half to be used for the actual composting, the other for storage of saw-dust.
3. Construct a roof over the composting bin.
4. Place a 4-to-6 inch layer of sawdust or hay on the half of the pad to be used for composting.
5. Place deer entrails on the sawdust.
6. Add a quart of ammonium nitrate.
7. Add 4 to 6 inches of sawdust **C**enough to cover the entrails.
8. Water thoroughly. The sawdust should be damp, like a wet sponge.
9. Add water one or two times a week, keeping the sawdust damp (do not water enough to create runoff).
10. When additional deer waste is added, repeat the process.

A conveniently located water source is a must. In six to eight months, the composted material is ready to spread. The composting process can be accelerated by using a two-stage composter that involves building two cells and moving the material periodically from one cell to the other.

This article was adapted from one written by Joan Love Smith - retired NRCS.



A deer composter needs to have 2 or more bins so the compost can be moved into another bin as it becomes ready to remove and put on your food plots.