Do's and Dont's in small-scale compost making

Which materials can be used?

Brown input material group:
Straw, woodchips, dry materials

Green input material group:
Leaves, grasses, crop residuals, waste fruit
!!! No municipal waste, slurry or meat !!!

Manure input material group:
Cow, chicken, horse manure
!!! No pig manure !!!

Conditioning input material group:
Old compost, clay, trace elements, minerals, suitable aerobe microbes

At which ratio should be the material groups used?

Brown/dry materials: 40%
Manures materials: 20%

Green/fresh materials: 30%
Conditioning materials: 10%

How to build a compost pile?

Always start with the lightest/roughest material followed by green/fresh material and manure last. Always put heaviest/wettest last. Repeat this sequence until a height of about 1.25-1.5 meters is reached.
The compost pile should have a ground width of 2-3 meters and a length of at least 4 meters.
Add about 50 litres of water per $1m^3$ of input material. Add the water in between the layers while building the pile.
If available, apply the compost starter 1-2 times in between the layers.
Compact the pile 2-3 times while building it enjoying the "compost dance."
When the pile is finished cover it with straw, banana or palm leaves or a breathing fabric.
!!! Don't use plastic !!!

When to turn?

Turn the compost pile as soon the core temperate reached and stayed at about 60-70°C for 3 days. In case no thermometer is available a core temperature of 60-70°C can be verified by testing the core temperature with 2 fingers. If it's too hot to keep the fingers longer than 2 seconds, the temperature is around 60-70°C. Turn again after about 2 weeks and a third time after 6 weeks.
The turning should be done in a way that the upper part of the windrow is turned the lower part and the inside out.

When is the compost finished?

The compost is finished when the core temperature reached ambient temperature and when the "water-cress" test results positive. A positive water-cress test means that water cress or a comparable other sentitive plant grows nicely in a compost sample without turning yellow and no other weeds grow. This indicated that the weed seeds were destroyed and no volatile gases are present anymore which would cause a yellow coloration of the water cress leaves.

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