

Composting

A Step-by-Step Guide

Why Compost?

- It is inexpensive, easy and a natural process
- Gives you free valuable and nutrient rich fertiliser for your garden
- Reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill (in landfill the organic waste produces harmful greenhouse gasses because the air cannot get to it)
- Composting at home is done above ground so the oxygen in the air allows the waste to decompose aerobically - no methane is produced
- Offset your CO₂ emissions (global warming gas) - composting for one year can save the same amount that your kettle produces in that time

The Right Place - (ideally)

- A sunny place
- On bare soil or with a layer of paper & twigs at the bottom to allow worms to colonise
- Where you can easily get to it to put your waste in and get your compost out

The Right Ingredients - (what do I add?)

Get yourself a small bucket or bin that you can keep in the kitchen to collect your waste (**Do NOT put cooked food, meat or fish in**) - when it gets full empty it into your compost bin - anything from the following two lists can be added. The best compost comes from a 50:50 mix of the two types.

Green Waste	Brown Waste
Vegetable peelings, leaves, fruit scraps	Cardboard & paper (scrunched or shredded)
Tea bags	Garden prunings, clippings, twigs
Coffee grounds, filter papers	Straw, Hay, bedding from vegetarian pets
Grass cuttings	Crushed egg shells
Nettles & young annual weeds (chickweed)	Ashes (from wood sources)
Old flowers & spent bedding plants	Natural fibres (ripped or shredded)
Leaves	Sawdust & wood chippings
	Corn cobs & stalks

Patience - (how long does it take?)

- Now you need to let nature do its work - it can take between nine and twelve months for your compost to be ready to use.
- Keep on adding greens and browns to top up your compost as the lower layers break down

When is it Ready? -

- Once your compost has turned into a dark, crumbly material, that looks like thick, moist soil and smells earthy and fresh it's ready to use
- Don't worry if it has bits of twigs or eggshell or looks a bit lumpy, but if the bits become too big (obviously not rotted) put them back in the top

Remove & Use -

- Remove the compost from the bottom of the bin (a bin with a hatch is the best) with a scoop or trowel - use it to
- Fertilise borders/veg patches
- Around trees and as a mulch
- Plant containers
- Feed the lawn

Continue to top-up from the top and you will get a steady supply of fresh compost

NEVER: -

- **add faeces from any animal that eats meat (including human animals) this contains pathogens**
- **add - perennial weeds (brambles, thistles, dandelions etc.), anything with seed heads or you will get the best weed patch in the neighbourhood**

To make a good composting bin see the YouTube video on how to make your own from wooden pallets