

HOW TO

Compost

Food scraps and garden trimmings generally make up about half of the contents of a household's general waste bin. Composting is a cheap, easy way to divert this waste from landfill, while also improving the quality of soil in your garden.



WHAT YOU'LL NEED

Tools

- Compost bin - one that sits on the ground and opens at the bottom is ideal
- Aerator (a spiral-shaped tool used to turn the compost) or garden fork

Compost ingredients

- Nitrogen-rich ingredients (green/wet): fruit and veggie scraps, tea leaves and bags, coffee grounds, cut flowers, grass clippings, manures
- Carbon-rich ingredients (brown/dry): garden trimmings (not woody branches), paper products, dry leaves, sawdust, straw
- Activators: comfrey, yarrow, animal manures (not cat or dog poo), blood and bone, pre-made compost

Did you know?

Almost anything that once lived can be composted, but the materials suggested here are a good place to start.

WHAT'S OK TO ADD



- Onion
- Citrus
- Egg shells
- Eucalyptus leaves
- Dog and human hair
- Nail clippings
- Natural fibres
- Newspaper and office paper (rip into small pieces)

WHAT TO AVOID



- Large amounts of meat or fish
- Bones
- Dairy products
- Cat or dog poo
- Weeds with seeds



As a rough guide, add one part kitchen scraps to two parts dry carbon ingredients.



SETTING UP YOUR COMPOST BIN

1

Start by choosing the right spot in your garden - somewhere shady and easily accessible from the kitchen is best. If the bin gets too hot or dries out, worms and compost microbes won't survive.

2

Dig the bin into the ground to at least 10cm. This deters unwanted visitors like rodents and cockroaches. You could also cover the base with mouse mesh.

3

Start with a layer of small twigs, egg cartons, and/or dry leaves for aeration.

4

Add your activators: comfrey and yarrow, animal manures (not dog or cat poo), blood and bone, or compost from an old heap.

5

Lightly spray the contents of the bin with water.



Your compost bin is now ready to use! Start adding your kitchen scraps and garden trimmings and remember the ratio: two-thirds kitchen scraps to one-third carbon (dry) ingredients. Add a diversity of materials for richer compost.

When the bin is one-third full, aerate the compost by turning it over with a garden fork. Repeat every couple of weeks to speed up the process.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Smelly compost

- Cause: Too much water or green ingredients
- Solution: For a quick fix, add garden lime and/or dry material and turn compost. In general, use more brown material to absorb moisture.

Pests

- Ants: Attracted to a dry bin where the base has not been dug in or closed properly. Solution: Add water and green ingredients.
- Cockroaches: Attracted if the bin is too acidic or anaerobic (no air). Solution: Add lime and turn compost.
- Rats/mice: May be drawn to certain ingredients if the bin is not closed or buried properly. Solution: Use mouse mesh to secure base. Avoid meat and dairy items. Cover food scraps with a layer of soil.

Don't panic

The finished product may not look like commercial compost, as different materials will break down at different rates. Some chunks and eggshells in your compost is fine – your garden won't mind!

Have a question about waste?
Call the Recycling Hotline on
9384 6711 and ask our experts!



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