



HOW TO...

Compost at Home

CONTENTS

- 2 *Introduction to Home Composting*
- 3-4 *How to Get Started*
- 5 *Ingredients of Home Composting*
- 6 *Troubleshooting & Advice*
- 7 *Get in Touch*



YOUR GUIDE TO HOME COMPOSTING

What is Home Composting?

Composting is an inexpensive, natural process that transforms your kitchen and garden waste into a valuable and nutrient rich food for your garden. It's easy to make and even easier to use.

Why should I try it?

Composting allows waste to break down aerobically (with the aid of oxygen.) This reduces the harmful green house gases emitted from food or garden waste, and allows us to turn our waste into a resource to look after our gardens, our wallets and our planet.

What do I need to get started?

1. A compost bin
2. Kitchen caddy/container to collect food waste
3. A mixture of green and brown materials
4. Air
5. Water
6. Ideally a reasonably sunny location on bare soil to place your bin.

HOW TO GET STARTED:



1. Pick your site;

Ideally site your compost bin in a reasonably sunny site on bare soil. If you have to put your compost bin on concrete, tarmac or patio slabs ensure there's a layer of paper and twigs or existing compost on the bottom so the worms and other creatures can colonise. Choose a place where you can easily add ingredients to the bin, and get your compost out.

2. Collect your materials;

Have a container available such as a kitchen caddy or an old ice cream tub so that you can collect items for your compost bin from all over your house. Fill your kitchen caddy or container with everything from vegetable and fruit peelings tote bags, toilet roll tubes, cereal boxes and eggshells. Take care NOT to compost cooked food, meat or fish.



3. Add your ingredients;

Empty your kitchen caddy along with your garden waste into your compost bin. A 50/50 mix of greens and browns is the perfect recipe for a good compost mix.



HOW TO GET STARTED:



4. Wait it out;

It takes between nine and twelve months for your compost to become ready for use, so now all you need to do is wait and let nature do the work. Keep on adding greens and browns to the top of your compost.

5. Check it out;

Once your compost has turned into a crumbly, dark material, resembling thick, moist soil and gives off an earthy, fresh aroma, you know it's ready to use!

6. Scoop it;

Lift the bin slightly or open the hatch at the bottom and scoop out the fresh compost with a garden fork, spade or trowel. Don't worry if your compost looks a little lumpy with twigs and bits of eggshells- this is perfectly normal.

7. Use it;

Use your new compost to enrich borders and vegetable patches, plant up patio containers or feed the lawn.



WHAT ARE THE INGREDIENTS?

Greens:

Young, wet, sappy materials, like grass cuttings and vegetable peelings, rot quickly and are known as “greens”. These materials are rich in nitrogen, which acts as a fuel for the compost.

- ✓ Tea Bags
- ✓ Grass Cuttings
- ✓ Vegetable peels and scraps
- ✓ Fruit scraps
- ✓ Old flowers
- ✓ Coffee grounds and filter paper
- ✓ Spent bedding plants
- ✓ Rhubarb leaves



The key to making good compost is to use a balance of different types of materials.

Browns:

Browns add volume and structure to the compost allowing air in and providing the microbes with a balanced diet. Aim for a 50/50 mix of both greens and browns.

Greens need to be mixed with tougher, dry items like old bedding plants and cardboard known as “browns”.

- ✓ Crushed egg shells
- ✓ Cardboard boxes
- ✓ Twigs and hedge clippings
- ✓ Straw and hay
- ✓ Feathers
- ✓ Old natural fibre clothes
- ✓ Tissues, paper towels
- ✓ Shredded documents
- ✓ Corn cobs/stalks
- ✓ Sawdust and wood chips

TROUBLE SHOOTING AND ADVICE

Remember to avoid...

It's important to remember that you can't compost everything. Plastics and metals should always be recycled separately. Meat, cooked vegetables, dairy products and cat litter might bring unwanted pests and rodents to your bin, or even just leave an unpleasant odour.

- ✗Cooked vegetables
- ✗Meat
- ✗Dairy Products
- ✗Diseased plants
- ✗Animal waste
- ✗Nappies

Troubleshooting...

Even the most expert composters run in to issues every now and then. We've collated a common list of problems and solutions to help you on your composting journey!

Q. Why does my compost smell bad?

A. This is due to a lack of air in the heap. Just turn the compost and add more browns.

Q. Why is only the centre heap dry?

A. This is due to a lack of water. Just add water while turning the heap.

Q. Why is my compost only dry/warm in the middle?

A. This is likely because the heap is too small. Collect more material, mix it together and reheap it.

Q. Why is my compost damp/sweet smelling?

A. This is due to a lack of nitrogen, just add in more green materials.



GET IN TOUCH:



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