

A Guide to Composting



What not to add

X No

- Meat, bones, fish, fats and dairy
- Bread or cake
- Inorganic materials such as plastic, glass, foil and metals
- Chemicals
- Chemically treated timber including treated pine sawdust
- Pet droppings
- Weeds
- Onions
- Citrus fruits (lemons, limes and oranges)
- Diseased plants
- Coloured paper and glossy magazines

FAQs

Why does my compost smell?

A healthy compost bin should never smell bad. A bad smelling compost bin suggests that the system is too wet or does not have enough air. Try turning the compost to add air and add some shredded newspaper or dry leaves.

How can I prevent rodents becoming an issue?

Always ensure your lid is secured tightly to your bin. If you have an open bottom design compost bin, place some small aviary wire beneath the bin to prevent rodents from getting in from below. Don't add dairy, meat or fish.

Why is it taking so long for my compost to break down?

Keeping your compost warm will increase the break down period. Place in a well sunlit area. A bin that is slow to breakdown is often a sign that the organic material is too dry. Try adding more kitchen scraps or garden clippings. Turn the compost and add some water.

Why does my compost have flies?

Small vinegar flies can gather in compost bins. These are harmless and do not affect your compost. If you wish to discourage them, sprinkle some garden lime powder on the compost, which will reduce the acidic conditions which attract them.



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**Macedon
Ranges**
Shire Council

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What is compost?

Compost is organic material made from broken-down food scraps and garden trimmings which is great for your garden. The organic material breaks down with the assistance of micro-organisms.

Why compost?

Composting allows you to reduce the amount of waste you send to landfill. This reduces demand for new landfills, reduces green house gas emissions and prevents organic liquids in landfill leaching into nearby waterways.

What do you need to start composting?

- A compost bin
- A turning tool
- A hessian sack or natural fibre blanket (for open bins)



How to compost

1. Choose a suitable location for your bin. The warmer the location, the better it will perform.
2. Add a layer of dry material such as straw, sticks and dry leaves.
3. Begin to add green waste such as freshly cut leaves and kitchen scraps. Keep this layer a similar thickness to the dry layer below.
4. Add an additional dry material layer and then start adding your food scraps and garden clippings.
6. The compost should feel damp. If it is too wet, add dry materials like paper, hay or leaves. If it is too dry, hose it down a little and turn the compost until all the material is damp.
7. Remember to turn your compost every few weeks to keep it aerated.
8. Keep your compost covered to retain heat and moisture and to deter vermin.
9. It will take several months for you to be able to harvest the rich dark humus soil from your compost.

What to add

✓ Yes

Wet materials:

- Fruit and vegetable scraps
- Fresh garden clippings, green leaves and grass cuttings
- Egg shells
- Coffee grounds

Dry materials

- Straw
- Old newspapers (wet)
- Vacuum cleaner dust
- Wood chips and sawdust (not from treated timber)
- Wood ash
- Hair

