

Subject: Composting - 'Nature's way of recycling your kitchen & garden waste'

Did you know that at least one quarter of household waste is compostable? Compost is easy to make and provides a nutrient rich food for your soil & plants.

What Can I Compost?

'Green Materials' (Nitrogen rich):		'Brown Materials' (Carbon rich):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruit & vegetable peelings • Egg shells 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teabags & coffee grounds • Grass cuttings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dead plants & prunings • Straw & pet bedding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twigs • Newspaper & cardboard
Aim for 2/3 of green material & 1/3 brown in your compost container.			
Worm Containers: no grass cuttings or brown material (other than for bedding) but pasta, bread, rice and other vegetarian cooked foodstuff may be added.			

How do I make compost?

- Collect your materials (brown & green) in a bucket
- Empty the materials into a compost bin
- Turn the materials with a fork to allow air in - air helps the materials to biodegrade
- Keep the compost covered (container lid/carpet/cardboard) to keep it warm



How long before I have usable compost?

Depending on what materials you put in, how often you turn it and the temperature, the compost should be ready to use within 3 - 6 months.

Do I need lots of space and special, expensive equipment?

No! You can make compost in a range of containers. For reduced price, purpose built containers contact your local council's Waste Management department. Residents in St Helens, Wigan and Halton can get a compost bin from £5 through WRAP (0808 100 2040). (Community groups can get free compost bins). Alternatively, most garden centres and DIY outlets sell ready made containers or try the internet, particularly for worm composting containers.

Small garden/patio or balcony? Make your own worm composter!

Plastic Dustbin or Worm container with fitting lid: drill several holes in the bottom of your plastic bin/container (box style storage containers work well). Line the bottom with natural fabric to prevent the worms from escaping. Cover the bottom of the container with 2 inches of compost or earth. Add 750 - 2000 tiger/red/brandling worms (these are available from fishing shops). Add a 1 inch layer of green or cooked food waste (above). Finally, shred at least 3 newspapers & or brown cardboard/egg cartons and soak in water. Squeeze excess water and place over top of food waste. This material is the worms bedding - it needs to be loose and about 1 ½ to 2 inches deep. Add more food waste under the bedding layer over time.



Top Tips for Happy Worms & Great Compost.

- Keep their bedding topped up and moist.
- Worms die in extreme temperatures - cover containers in winter and shade in summer.
- To retrieve the compost, tip entire contents out. Separate undigested material and two thirds of worms and return to container. Apply new bedding and start again.
- Use the compost complete with some worms straight on the garden or mixed with earth/top soil in containers.