

Composting is easy

Everyone with a garden should compost!

Composting turns organic household waste such as teabags or fruit and vegetable peelings into a valuable product for your garden and can reduce the amount of household waste you send to landfill by almost 33%. If you have a garden, composting is easy and takes up very little time or space.

To compost waste you need to:

1. Get a compost bin or build a compost heap
2. Install your compost bin
3. Use your compost bin

Get your compost bin

Compost bins are tidy, relatively cheap and available from your local garden centre or at a reduced cost from your local authority. Contact www.raceagainstwaste.com if you need help sourcing a compost bin in your area or for advice on building your own compost heap.



Install your compost bin

Choose the right place for your compost bin – choose a spot in your garden that is not too sunny and where the soil is free draining. This will ensure your compost will be moist but well aerated and will encourage insect activity and ultimately better compost. Locate the compost bin or heap in a position that is convenient to your house – make using it easy for yourself.

Use your bin

Separate your organic kitchen waste and garden waste from all other waste, put it in your compost bin and mix it with a garden fork at least once every two weeks.

Getting a balance between green and brown waste is essential. A good mix of browns and greens achieves the best balance and also helps with the aeration and amount of water in the pile. Too much of one or the other and you won't make good compost.

- 'Browns' are dry and dead plant materials such as straw, dry brown weeds, autumn leaves, and wood chips or sawdust.
- 'Greens' are fresh (and often green) plant materials such as green weeds from the garden, kitchen fruit and vegetable scraps, green leaves, coffee grounds and tea bags, fresh horse manure, etc.



Race against Waste



Use your bin (continued)

For best results place the 'greens' and 'browns' in alternate layers about ten inches thick. In most circumstances the compost will be ready in 2/3 months. Compost is ready when it becomes dark, crumbly and uniform in texture. Compost can be used as mulch around plants, as a top dressing over your lawn which can fertilise the soil or as a soil improver in vegetable or flower beds.



You can compost the following:

Green	Brown
Garden waste	Kitchen paper
Leaves	Sawdust and wood shavings
Weeds (not weed seeds)	Straw
Dead Plants and flowers	Paper
Grass and hedge cuttings	Wood
Branches and twigs	Twigs and branches (cut into pieces)
Kitchen scraps	Crushed egg shells
Fruit, Vegetables (cooked or uncooked)	Feathers
Bread, pasta and rice	
Tea bags and coffee	

The following cannot be composted:

	Why it can't be composted
Raw and cooked meat, bones	Attract pests
Poultry and Fish	Attract pests
Dairy products	Attract pests
Greasy oily food such as mayonnaise or butter	Attract pests and decompose slowly
Dog and cat litter	May contain pathogens (disease causing organisms)
Non-biodegradable (plastics, glass, metals)	Will not decompose
Glossy papers and magazines	The glossy coating will not decompose
Weed seeds	Spreads weeds
Diseased plant material	Danger of spreading disease to other plants
Garden waste recently sprayed with pesticide	Chemicals need time for thorough decomposition.
Sawdust and wood shavings from treated wood	Chemicals need time for thorough decomposition
Disposable nappies, used paper tissue	Could potentially contain pathogens (disease causing organisms)