

HARVESTING YOUR COMPOST

1. Your compost is ready to use when it is dark and has a mild earthy smell (no ammonia smell).
2. To harvest, lift the compost bin gently up and off the pile.
3. Remove any unfinished compost and set aside.
4. Remove all the finished compost and use as desired.
5. Replace your compost bin in its original footprint.
6. Start building your compost again adding the unfinished compost.

USING YOUR COMPOST

1. Dig into flower and vegetable gardens to a depth of about 5cm.
2. Apply to the surface of garden beds as mulch to reduce water usage. Keep it away from stems of plants especially seedlings.
3. Use as top dressing on your lawn.
4. Spread between rows of growing plants.



COMPOST TROUBLESHOOTING

PROBLEM	CAUSE	SOLUTION
The Compost Smells	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too wet • Insufficient oxygen • Too acidic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add more carbon-rich material to provide air pockets • Aerate/turn compost manually more often to increase oxygen • Sprinkle with some dolomite to reduce acidity
Compost is Attracting Vermin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meat/fish/dairy products/pet faeces in compost • Too much bread in compost • Insufficient moisture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place fine chicken wire under bin - refer to 'Setting up Your Compost Bin' • Always cover the surface of the compost with a hessian sack or similar and keep lid on • Keep the compost moist - vermin do not like a damp environment • Aerate / turn compost manually more often - vermin do not like disturbance • Sprinkle with some dolomite • Reduce the amount of meat / fish / dairy products / bread in compost
Slow Decomposition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient oxygen • Insufficient moisture • Unbalanced mix of ingredients • Cold weather 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add more nitrogen-rich material e.g. manures, grass clippings, blood & bone • Check moisture level and add water as required - dry compost does not heat up • Aerate / turn compost manually more often • Sprinkle with some dolomite

NOTES

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To learn more about the Halve Waste campaign visit halvewaste.com.au

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HOME COMPOSTING

FROM SET UP TO HARVESTING AND MUCH MORE!



WHAT IS COMPOSTING?

Composting is nature's recycling system - it is the process of decomposition of organic matter into a soil-like material called 'compost'.

The decomposition process occurs as a result of the activities of beneficial microscopic organisms like bacteria and fungi and other living creatures such as worms and slaters.

WHY COMPOST?

Composting is nature's recycling system - it is the process of decomposition of organic matter into a soil-like material called 'compost'.

The decomposition process occurs as a result of the activities of beneficial microscopic organisms like bacteria and fungi and other living creatures such as worms and slaters in soil.

Benefits of composting include:

- ✓ Reduction of waste disposed to landfill
approx. 40 to 60% of household waste is compostable
- ✓ Reduction of the production of methane
- a powerful greenhouse gas
- ✓ Enrichment of soil health
- ✓ Improvement of soil structure and its capacity to hold water
- ✓ Increases disease resistance in plants
- ✓ Significantly reduces dependence on artificial fertilisers and pesticides
- ✓ Can save you money!

WHAT TO COMPOST

Most organic material can be composted. You will produce beautiful, nutrient-rich compost if you add a diverse range of both nitrogen-rich and carbon-rich ingredients to your compost bin or heap.

Check out our list of kitchen and garden wastes that can be added to your compost below.

✓ Nitrogen-rich Kitchen Wastes

Fruit scraps, vegetable peelings, house plant cuttings, coffee grounds, rice and pasta, egg shells, tea bags, vacuum dust, hair.



✓ Nitrogen-rich Garden Wastes

Flowers, vegetables, plant trimmings, hedge clippings, grass clippings, horse, chicken or cow manure.



✓ Carbon-rich Kitchen Wastes

Coffee filters, bread, paper napkins and towels, clothes dryer lint, hair, egg cartons, torn up pizza boxes.



✓ Carbon-rich Garden Wastes

Leaves, straw or hay, small twigs, mulch, dried grass and weeds.



WHAT NOT TO COMPOST

It is recommended that you do not compost animal products. Although these items can be composted they can cause problems if not composted correctly.

Check out our **DO NOT** compost list below.

✗ Meat, fish or bones

✗ Dairy products

✗ Oils or fat

✗ Chemicals

✗ Dog, cat or human faeces

✗ Diseased plants

✗ Mature weeds with seeds

✗ Ashes



SETTING UP YOUR COMPOST BIN/HEAP

1. Position your compost bin or heap in a well drained place.
2. Place some fine chicken wire under the bin, fold up the sides and tie. This stops vermin digging into your bin.
3. Start with a bottom layer 20-30 cm deep of coarse, carbon-rich garden waste like small twigs and sticks, and mulch. This material allows good drainage and aeration.
4. Water the bottom layer well.
5. Add 2-3 shovels of finished compost or nice, black, alive soil from your garden. This adds the essential living organisms to your compost.
6. Add a kitchen tidy bin full of food scraps. The compost process is aided if you chop up bulky items such as watermelon rinds and corn cobs before you place them in your kitchen tidy bin.
7. For every addition of nitrogen-rich food scraps, add the same amount of carbon-rich material i.e. one bucket of food scraps to one bucket of leaves, straw and mulch.
8. Mix all the materials in the compost bin /heap with a spiral compost tool or a pitch fork.
9. Check the moisture - add water if required to make moist.
10. Always cover food scraps on the surface with a couple of handfuls of carbon-rich material like leaves & mulch. This helps to reduce flies.
11. Cover the surface of the compost with a compost 'blanket' e.g. a damp hessian sack or newspaper. This keeps the compost moist and dark for the worms and other living organisms.

MAINTAINING YOUR COMPOST

Always follow the A.D.A.M. principles while composting:

✓ A - Aliveness

Compost is a living system full of worms, bacteria, fungi, microbes and other critters that eat their way through your organic waste.

✓ D - Diversity

Include a range of ingredients to get a balanced and nutrient rich compost.

✓ A - Aeration

Keep your compost aerated by turning / mixing it at least once every two weeks. Air is important for the beneficial bacteria in your compost and helps to keep smells at bay.

✓ M - Moisture

Moisture is needed to keep compost alive and to help it break down faster. Keep your compost moist but not soggy for the best results.

- Add a handful of other ingredients like chook manure, vacuum dust, and hair regularly.
- Add a handful of dolomite once per month to balance the acidity.
- When the bin is full it needs to be left to mature for 6-8 weeks. Keep the bin contents moist and aerate/mix regularly.
- If you have a second compost bin, start building a new compost.