

Create your own compost



Composting is a great way to use your garden or kitchen waste to help grow healthy plants and keep costs down in the garden. Composting is a naturally occurring process where bacteria, fungi, and other decomposing organisms such as worms break down organic waste like grass cuttings and food scraps, turning into fertiliser.

Composting at home can be really simple. Choose the size of your container, depending on how much space you have. It can sit on grass, soil or concrete and will work best in a sunny or partly-shaded location that is easily accessible. It will need a wide opening for adding waste, a lid to keep heat in and rain out, and strength to hold its contents.

Find out how to make your own compost bin from Garden Organic.

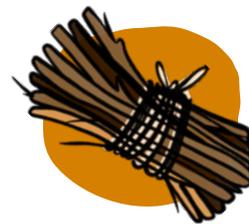
Once you've got your composting container set up, you can think about what to fill it up with. Compost works best when there's a good balance of 'green' and 'brown' material to decompose.

Looking to learn more about worms? Check out the Worm Hunt, being run in May



Green materials are nitrogen-rich

- Kitchen waste
 - Weeds
- Grass cuttings
- Coffee grounds
- Plant leaves



Brown materials will provide carbon

- Twigs
- Woody stems
- Straw
- Paper
- Cardboard

Top Tips

- Remove any weeds seeds or roots hiding away in garden waste as they could germinate, meaning you'll be dealing with the same weeds again when you put your compost on the soil.
- Along with garden waste, raw kitchen waste such as vegetable and fruit peelings are great for composting, but be sure to avoid any cooked food and raw meat or fish as this can attract vermin.
- Avoid compressing your compost heap to make more space. This can cause it to go anaerobic, meaning there's not enough oxygen. If your compost heap has a strong smell, this may be what has happened. Ensure you have a mix of both brown and green materials, and use long poles or a garden fork to create air channels to ensure plenty of oxygen is moving through.
- If you have the space, it's best to have three compost bins on the go: one with ready-to-use compost, one that's in the process of composting, and one you're filling with current waste.
- Schools or community groups can try putting buckets or bins out in shared spaces to collect fruit peelings – these make great green material!
- If you don't have much space, a Rotbot can be a cheap and space-efficient way to get composting. Read our guide below to make your own.

Did you know?
Many tea bags are compostable! Just check that they are plastic-free before adding them to your compost.



How to make a Rotbot

Steps:

- 1 Take the label off the bottle and cut $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way around the top of the bottle (but not all the way around) so it acts like a hinge. Make sure the person doing this is confident and safe using scissors.
- 2 Open the bottle and add the below in order, repeating the steps until your bottle is full:
 - A 2–3cm layer of soil to the bottom of the bottle, if dry moisten with some water
 - A 2–3cm layer of fruit and vegetable peelings
 - A 1cm layer of soil
 - A layer of shredded newspaper
 - A 1 cm layer of soil
 - A layer of grass and leaves
- 3 Add a little water to dampen.
- 4 Tape the top of the bottle closed.



- 5 Mark where the layers reach in your bottle.
- 6 Put the bottle somewhere warm and sunny.
- 7 When the ingredients look like dark, rich soil – usually after four to six weeks – your compost will be ready to use!

You'll need:

- a two litre plastic drinks bottle
- sharp scissors (handle with care!)
- one cup of newspaper ripped into small pieces
- a small amount of soil
- a handful of leaves and dry grass
- two handfuls of fresh fruit and vegetable peelings cut up really small
- water spray
- sticky tape



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