

# START HOME COMPOSTING TODAY

At least **30%** of your household bin could be composted!

A lot of people think that garden waste is the only thing that you can put into your compost bin. But there are actually loads more everyday waste items from your home and garden that you can add to enrich your compost. Things you CAN add to your compost bin include:

## 'GREENS'

- Tea bags
- Grass cuttings
- Vegetable peelings (including lettuce and cabbage leaves)
- Old flowers
- Fruit scraps (including citrus peel)
- Nettles
- Coffee grounds & filter paper
- Spent bedding plants
- Comfrey leaves
- Rhubarb leaves
- Young annual weeds (e.g. chickweed and speedwell)
- Pond algae & seaweed (in moderation)

## 'BROWNS'

- Egg shells (crush them first to speed up composting)
- Egg boxes
- Cereal boxes
- Corrugated cardboard packaging (scrunched up in small amounts)
- Newspaper (scrunched up)
- Toilet & kitchen roll tubes
- Garden prunings
- Dry leaves, twigs & hedge clippings
- Straw & hay
- Bedding from vegetarian pets
- Wool
- Feathers
- Ashes from wood, paper, or lumpwood charcoal
- Woody clippings
- Cotton threads
- String (made from natural fibres)
- Tumble dryer lint (from natural fibre clothes)
- Old natural fibre clothes (e.g. woolly jumpers or cotton t-shirts – cut into small pieces)
- Vacuum bag contents (if you have natural fibre carpets)
- Tissues, paper towels & napkins (unless they have been in contact with meat, fats, oils or disease)
- Shredded confidential documents
- Corn cobs & stalks
- Pine needles & cones (slow to compost – don't put too much in)

# WHY COMPOST AT HOME?



Composting is an inexpensive, natural process that transforms your kitchen and garden waste into an invaluable and nutrient rich food for your garden.

## FOR THE ENVIRONMENT...

Doing your bit to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill by composting at home can save powerful global warming gases equivalent to:

- the CO<sub>2</sub> your kettle produces annually; or
- what your washing machine produces in 3 months; or
- not watching television for 3 months.\*

\*based on Loewe Connect 42 Media Full-HD+ 42" Full HD LCD TV

## FOR THE GARDEN...

Your compost is a nutrient-rich food product for your garden and will help:

- improve soil structure and condition;
- maintain moisture levels;
- keep your soil's pH balance in check; and
- suppress plant disease.

[www.recyclenow.com/compost](http://www.recyclenow.com/compost)

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# GETTING THE RIGHT MIX

We filled three compost bins with three different mixtures to show you how to make the best compost

## TOO GREEN!

This is a classic mistake made by many first time composters. They get their brand new compost bin and just use it to get rid of their grass cuttings, fruit and vegetable peelings. These are great things to put in a bin, but on their own you will end up with a sludgy, smelly mess.



- 1 First day – only grass cuttings and peelings visible.
- 2 After a couple of weeks – lots of fruit flies, looks like a green lump, smells rotten and the bin feels warm at this stage.



- 3 After a month – will just be a moist, lumpy mess and will have lost that vital heat, that is needed for the composting process due to the lack of air.



### Can I do anything about it?

A bit of hard work is the remedy for sludge. Use a fork to empty the bin and break up any solid clumps. Then refill the bin adding plenty of brown material and some fresh greens as you go. Be patient, as it will take a couple of months to look like it should do.

## TOO BROWN!

Autumn is a typical time of year for this to occur. Because of the large number of leaves falling from the trees and a flurry of plant pruning, bins get filled with too many leaves. Leafmould usually takes two years before it is ready to use. You don't necessarily need nitrogen to kick start the process but it helps. Autumn leaves just don't produce enough nitrogen to activate the heat production.



- 1 First day – a heap of leaves, branches, straw and paper, very dry looking.
- 2 After a couple of weeks – looks much the same, no smell and just a few woodlice and ants.
- 3 After a month – still no change!



### That's like my bin, what can I do?

Leaves should be composted separately to make lovely leafmould. Thoroughly water the leaves and place in black plastic sacks, punctured with a fork to allow air to circulate.

It should take about two years for leafmould to be produced. This rich leafmould can be used as a weed suppressing and moisture retaining mulch or a soil improver.

If your bin does have more leaves in it than it should do, you can add nettles soaked in cold water which also make a great activator for a dry compost bin.

## JUST RIGHT!

The 'green' items contain bacteria that generates the initial heat that is required by the process. A healthy compost bin is a living ecosystem. By keeping a good mix of green and brown material you will provide the perfect conditions for a variety of mini-beasts, and can let them do all of the hard work.

- 1 First day – green and brown items visible; egg shells, vegetable peelings, crunched up cardboard, grass cuttings, prunings etc.



- 2 After a couple of weeks – looking a bit moist, the level will keep dropping and air-pockets will be letting it breathe.
  - After a couple of months – small clumps of green material are still visible, brown items still showing but starting to decompose and looking quite damp, fruit flies and slugs and worms may also be present.



- 3 After six months – black and crumbly material, no smell, some woody brown material and egg shells still visible, some worms and bugs left but most creatures will have moved on to find fresher food.



### That wasn't too tricky, what should I do to keep it going?

Just keep on doing the same thing. Make sure you keep adding the right combination of green and browns and you'll have a continuous supply of nutritious compost for your garden. Don't forget to aerate your compost once in a while by using a fork or a broom handle.

Why do I need to compost my peelings when they break down in landfill anyway?



In reality organic waste that is sent to landfill is unable to decompose properly because, squashed under all the other waste, it doesn't have any access to air. So instead methane, a powerful greenhouse gas, is produced which contributes to global warming. When you compost your organic waste at home you are not only providing your garden with a limitless soil improver for plants and vegetables, but you are doing your bit to reduce global warming too!