

# HOW TO COMPOST AT HOME





Composting your food scraps and garden waste is one of the best ways to help fight climate change. Feed your garden with nutritious compost while also reducing greenhouse gas emissions!



## ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

When organic waste like food scraps and garden cuttings go to landfill, they decompose and create methane, a greenhouse gas that is far more potent than carbon dioxide.






The use of compost in gardening can:

-  **Reduce the amount of water required**
-  **Reduce the need for synthetic fertilisers**
-  **Improve the structure, fertility and health of soils**
-  **Help regenerate soils suffering from poor management**

### DID YOU KNOW?

Globally, if food waste was a country, it would be the third largest greenhouse gas emitter after the USA and China!

## SETTING UP A COMPOST

-  Purchase a compost bin that's right for you.
-  Place your compost bin where it will get a lot of sun. The heat will help to speed up the process. Just remember to air it regularly.
-  Ensure your compost bin is at least 30 cm from walls, fences or any structure to avoid rodents.
-  Collect food scraps in your kitchen in a small container or bin that is easy to clean and carry to your compost. Add to compost when full.
-  Maintain your compost by ensuring it has a good mix of green and brown scraps (more on this later).
-  Check with your local council or community garden to see if they run composting workshops if you need more help getting started.

## MAINTAINING A COMPOST

To maintain your compost, you'll need a good balance of the following:

**N**

### NITROGEN (GREEN SCRAPS)

- Fruit and veggie scraps including chilli
- Citrus and onions
- Garlic
- Grains
- Tea and coffee
- Flowers
- Small quantities only of bread, rice and pasta

**C**

### CARBON (BROWN SCRAPS)

- Dry leaves
- Shredded paper and cardboard
- Straw
- Wood chips and saw dust
- Dry grass

**O<sup>2</sup>**

### OXYGEN

- Make sure you turn your compost regularly (at least once a month)

**H<sub>2</sub>O**

### WATER

- Sprinkle water when necessary to ensure your compost is moist, but not wet



### SAVE MONEY!

Some councils have subsidies that will take up to 80% off the price of home composting systems.

See if you're eligible at Compost Revolution.

**CHECK ELIGIBILITY HERE**

## HARVESTING

Your compost is ready to use when it looks like soil and has an earthy smell. If you find any materials that haven't broken down, simply remove them from the soil and put them back in the compost bin.

### HARVESTING FROM A BIN

Remove the compost from the bottom. New materials thrown on the top may not be ready yet. Most bins have a little door at the bottom to make this easy for you.

If you have lots of food scraps and enough space, consider buying two bins. Once the first bin is full, you can leave it to break down the waste into compost while you begin to add waste to the second bin.

### HARVESTING FROM A TUMBLER

If your tumbler has two compartments, fill one up first and let it mature while you start filling the other half. If it has only one compartment and it is full, you'll have to

wait around 4-12 weeks until the whole batch is ready (check frequently and air it regularly).

Once the compost is ready, empty it into a bucket and start over. You can leave a little bit in the tumbler to kick start your new compost.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

Your compost is ready to use when it looks like soil and has an earthy smell. If you find any materials that haven't broken down, simply remove them from the soil and put them back in the compost bin.

### WORMS

Compost worms will naturally appear. They are amazing creatures that will increase the quality of your compost, so let them be.



### ANTS & COCKROACHES

The compost might be too dry. Add water and stir.

### MATERIAL NOT BREAKING DOWN

It could be too dry, too cold or doesn't have enough oxygen. Turn your compost more frequently, add some water and more green and brown scraps to increase its mass and generate more heat.



### FLIES

The flies around compost bins are usually fruit flies. They are harmless, but it is often a sign that your compost is too wet. This can easily be fixed by adding extra dry or carbon rich material such as dead leaves.

If you have house or brown flies, it may be because you added meat or dairy products to your compost. Add soil to the mix and refrain from adding any more meat or dairy to your compost.

### SOLDIER FLY LARVAE

Often mistaken for maggots, soldier fly larvae are bigger and brown. Don't remove them! Any respectable composter will know they will get the job done faster and they will eventually leave.

### BAD SMELL

It might be missing oxygen or brown scraps. Add dry leaves and give it a good stir.

### RODENTS

Rodents are attracted to smelly or uncovered food. Stir your compost regularly to avoid rodent nesting. Place a wire mesh below your compost so they cannot get in through the soil and ensure the lid is properly closed. A tumbler is less likely to attract rodents.

## TOO DRY

Spray some water but avoid over-watering. Add green scraps, particularly fruit scraps.

## TOO WET

For excessive moisture, add dry brown scraps. Check container to ensure it has good drainage.



## PRO TIPS



The most common problem is not having access to enough **dry leaves**. Why not get them from the street? There is a surplus of dry leaves on our walkways, so don't be shy to collect them from public spaces.



If you need more nitrogen for your compost, register with **ShareWaste** to accept food scraps from your neighbours.

**REGISTER HERE**



For more food waste tips, visit  
**[recyclingnearyou.com.au](https://recyclingnearyou.com.au)**

