



HELP & HINTS – 'MAKING YOUR OWN COMPOST'

Making your own compost is good in lots of ways – it keeps your soil fertile, it makes use of green waste and it reduces the amount of landfill that councils have to dispose of.

There are no hard and fast rules, but here are some guidelines to follow:

◆ Keep a good mix of soft and hard materials

For example, if you add some grass clippings, then follow them with a layer of cardboard on top.

◆ Don't ever add meat or cooked food waste

This can encourage rats and mice to visit or nest in your compost heap.

◆ The bigger the better

The larger your compost heap, the hotter it will get, and the faster it will convert. If you can, it makes sense to combine the waste from several households to make one big heap, and share the compost once it's made.

◆ Insulate it well

A basic compost heap can be built from old pallets – but if you can, add some good insulation to the walls. You can do this by making a double wall and adding wool or shredded cardboard, or you can use discarded loft insulation, if you can get it (making sure it's safe, e.g. don't use asbestos).

The object is to increase the temperature that your compost heap reaches, as the hotter it gets, the faster your compost will be made.

◆ Mix it regularly

Turning the heap helps get air to the heap, and brings different materials into contact with each other. This will help increase the activity.

Some compost bins are mounted on gimbals so that you can turn the whole bin.

Some authorities recommend spiking the heap or building it on a grid to allow air to get in, but others say that this makes no difference!

◆ Activate the heap

The traditional activator is urine! – but if you don't like the idea of this, there are many commercial activators available. These will all help speed up conversion.

◆ Keep more than one heap

Depending on the temperature, it can take up to a year to make good compost. This means you may well want to have two or three heaps on the go, with one or two converting and one being built.

◆ It won't work unless it's on the garden!

Don't forget to spread it on your garden once it's converted! You can dig it in, or use it as a mulch - and let the worms do the work!