

Composting FAQ

Where do I get a compost bin from?

We have teamed up with the Derbyshire County Council to offer [discounted compost bins](#) to all its residents or you can find out about special compost bin offers in your area from [getcomposting](#).

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

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. 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!

My compost is a moist, lumpy mess, smells rotten and there are lots of flies in the bin - what's wrong?

A classic mistake made by many first time composters is to use their new compost bin to get rid of grass cuttings, fruit and vegetable peelings. On their own you will end up with a sludgy, smelly mess. Empty the bin and break up any large lumps. Then refill the bin adding plenty of brown material (see below) and some fresh greens as you go. Then be patient! It will take a couple of months to look like it should.

My compost is dry and brown and doesn't seem to be doing anything - what's wrong?

This usually happens in autumn when the bin is filled with leaves and plant prunings. Autumn leaves don't produce enough nitrogen to activate the heat production process.

How do I make healthy compost?

Gather leaves, water them thoroughly and place in black plastic sacks, punctured with a fork to allow air to circulate. After about two years you will have rich leafmould, which can be used as a weed suppressant and moisture retaining mulch or a soil improver.

The green materials contain bacteria that generate the heat that is required by the process. A healthy compost bin is living ecosystem, which has a good mix of green and brown materials providing the perfect conditions for a variety of mini-beasts, especially worms who do all the hard work.

Green materials	Brown materials
Tea bags	Crushed egg shells
Grass cuttings	Corrugated cardboard packaging (ripped into small pieces)
Vegetable peelings	Newspaper (scrunched up)

Old flowers	Toilet and kitchen roll tubes
Fruit scraps	Garden prunings
Nettles	Dry leaves, twigs and hedge clippings

Too many greens and your compost will get sloppy. Too many browns and it will stop working. For full details of what you should and shouldn't put in your home composter, how to get the best compost and how to use it visit [RecycleNow](#).