

• Fruit scraps • Vegetable peelings • Grass • Tea • Coffee • Egg boxes • Paper • Cardboard • Egg shells • Fruit scraps • Vegetable peelings • Grass • Paper •



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Composting at home

It is important that only the right materials go into your compost bin. Please continue to use your normal household bin and recycling services for all other waste.

For more information on how to use your compost bin please visit our website:

www.zerowastescotland.org.uk

or call the Home Composting Helpline on:

0845 600 0323

The Helpline is open
8am - 8pm Monday to Friday
9am - 12pm Saturday

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is my compost smelly/slimy?

If your compost smells bad or is slimy there is probably too much green material and/or not enough air.

If you can see mainly green materials you should add some brown materials such as scrunched up paper and cardboard, egg boxes, toilet roll tubes and hedge clippings.

You can also add air to your compost by turning it.

My compost bin isn't working/it's taking longer than you said.

Composting is a slow process, especially if there isn't much material in your bin.

Here are some of the reasons your compost might be taking a long time and how to speed it up:

- Your bin might be too cold. Try moving it to a sunnier position.
- Your bin might be too dry. Add some green materials and water.
- Your bin might not have enough air. Turn your compost.
- Give your compost a kick-start by adding some ready-made compost or soil.

How can I prevent unwelcome guests?

You can discourage unwanted scavengers such as rats and foxes by making sure that you don't put any cooked food, dairy products, meat or fish in your compost bin.

Some flies appear when I open the lid. Is this normal?

These are most likely to be fruit flies, indicating that there is too much green waste in your bin. Wrap the waste in newspaper or cover the waste with brown materials such as a thin layer of soil.

I have a brown bin provided by the council - should I use this instead of my composter?

Compostable materials collected in your brown bin are composted centrally. Home composting is even better for the environment as your compostable materials do not need to be transported to another site.

What can I do with my non-compostable kitchen waste?

Try and reduce your kitchen waste. Our Love Food Hate Waste Campaign provides hints and tips on how to reduce your food waste as well as recipe ideas for leftovers. For more information, visit: www.zerowastescotland.org.uk



A 'how to' guide



Zero Waste Scotland works with businesses, individuals, communities and local authorities to help them reduce waste, recycle more and use resources sustainably. Printed on 100% recycled paper.



Composting at home

This guide provides information as well as hints and tips on 'how to' compost at home.



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WHAT

Home composting is easy. All you need is a 50/50 mix of both **green** and **brown** materials in your compost bin.

GREEN materials contain lots of nitrogen. They break down quickly and help to keep the compost moist.

BROWN materials contain lots of carbon. They break down more slowly and add structure to your compost. They also create air pockets which are important for air circulation.

Green materials include:

- ✓ Cut flowers
- ✓ Fruit scraps and vegetable peelings
- ✓ Garden and house plants
- ✓ Grass cuttings
- ✓ Tea leaves/bags and coffee grounds
- ✓ Young annual weeds

Brown materials include:

- ✓ Paper items which can include scrunched up cardboard, egg boxes, toilet roll tubes, shredded letters, unwanted mail including envelopes with the windows taken out
- ✓ Straw and hay
- ✓ Egg shells
- ✓ The contents of your vacuum cleaner

Please do not put the following materials in your compost bin:

- ✗ Cooked food
- ✗ Raw meat and fish (including bones)
- ✗ Diseased plants
- ✗ Coal or coke ash (small amount of wood ash is ok)
- ✗ Cat or dog waste
- ✗ Nappies, glass, plastic or metal

WHERE

Siting your compost bin

Put your compost bin in an area that is accessible all year round. This will make it easy for you to add new materials.

Ideally your compost bin should be placed on the ground (either bare soil or grass), not on concrete, tarmac or patio slabs.

This will make it easier for helpful worms and other creatures, which help break down your garden and kitchen waste, to get into your bin.

To help the composting process, choose a location for your compost bin that is out of excessive sunlight and is sheltered from the wind.

HOW

To start off with it is a good idea to place a layer of brown materials such as branches and twigs at the bottom of your bin. This layer should be about 6 inches (15cm) deep and will help air to circulate at the bottom of the compost bin once more materials have been added. Good air circulation speeds up the composting process.

Adding materials

Once the first layer of twigs and branches have been put into your home compost bin, more brown and green materials can be added as they become available. A 50/50 mix of green and brown materials should be added to your compost bin, as this will create the best compost.

Adding air

Adding air speeds up the composting process although it is not necessary to add air to your compost if you have the right mix of greens and browns. You can add air to your compost by using one of the following methods:

- Turn your compost using a garden fork;
- Use an aerator stick;
- Create natural air pockets with scrunched up paper and cardboard.

Compost too wet or too dry?

Your compost needs the right amount of moisture to work. If your compost feels dry and dusty you should add some water. If your compost feels slimy or soggy you should mix in some brown materials such as scrunched up cardboard, paper or small twigs to absorb the extra moisture.

How long does it take?

The time it takes to get useable compost depends on:

- The type and quantity of materials in your bin;
- The time of year;
- How often you turn your compost.

Compost will usually take between 6 and 18 months to be produced.

Is my compost ready?

When your compost is ready it will be crumbly and dark brown with an 'earthy' smell.

WHY

Home composting:

- Creates a useful product that can be used as mulch, soil conditioner, lawn conditioner or as part of a seed and potting mix.
- Scotland produces enough organic waste every year to fill Hampden stadium more than 18 times. By composting at home, you can reduce this type of waste going to landfill.
- Reduces the production of methane, a powerful greenhouse gas that is produced when kitchen and garden waste break down in a landfill. Methane gas contributes to global warming.
- Saves the Earth's natural resources by reducing the need for peat taken from endangered habitats.
- Reduces the amount of waste collected, transported and processed, which is an important carbon saving.

Uses for compost:

There are a number of different uses for your home compost.

Mulch –

a layer of compost can be applied to the surface of soil. This will add nutrients and help to encourage plant growth, as well as trapping moisture and reducing the amount of watering needed.

Soil conditioner –

mix compost into the soil to improve structure and add nutrients.

Lawn conditioner –

mix an equal amount of sharp sand and fine compost and spread over your lawn. It is advisable to sieve the compost and remove any big lumps before spreading on the lawn.

Seed and potting mix –

mix equal amounts of soil and compost. Experiment to find out the best proportions.