

# TWIN BIN COMPOSTING



'X-ray' view of Twin Bins in action. **Fill Bin 1. Leave it to mature. Start again in Bin 2.**  
When Bin 2 is full, Bin 1 should be ready (or nearly ready) to use in your garden.

Follow this **COMPOST RECIPE** and you will:

- enjoy making fantastic FREE soil for your garden from your food scraps, dry leaves, weeds etc.
- feel good about not wasting things!
- be doing the right thing for the planet!

**BUY 2 BINS** with solid walls, with no little holes or trapdoors. Tumbleweed 220L compost bins are highly recommended. After you've bought your Twin Bins, a garden fork or compost aerator and a bag of Garden Lime, you'll have free compost forever!

**GETTING READY...** Choose a place in your backyard that is easy and quick to take your kitchen scraps to, and close to where you will use your compost. For example: in a garden bed where you might like to grow some food. **BURY THE BOTTOM EDGE OF THE BINS, about 100mm deep.** ( If you don't do this, rats, mice, cockroaches, ants and slater beetles can easily get in.)

**INGREDIENTS:** (see page 2 for Method.)

**Approx. 3 parts 'Green Stuff' + 1 part 'Brown' stuff + Air + Water + Microbes + Garden Lime (rarely)**

## 'GREEN' STUFF

(relatively rich in nitrogen)

- Fruit and vegie scraps of **any colour**, raw or cooked
- Teabags
- Coffee grounds
- Green weeds
- other garden scraps
- Fresh grass clippings
- (optional) a little cow, sheep or chicken manure to speed up the process

*DON'T use milk, cheese or meat until you have made several bins of good compost. And if you do start to add these, make sure you keep mixing and aerating regularly.*



## 'BROWN' STUFF

(relatively rich in carbon)

- Sticks from under a tree
- Tree bark
- Dry leaves
- Straw
- Dry weeds with seeds cut off
- Wood chips
- Dry grass clippings
- Strips of cardboard boxes
- Strips of newspaper
- Shredded office paper
- Paper towels
- Paper serviettes
- \* Crushed egg shells (they help to balance acidity)



## AIR

If your materials (eg sticks) keep spaces open inside the bin, this will keep some air in the bin. The good microbes are aerobic – they need air! Use a compost aerator, garden fork or strong stick to open up air spaces amongst the contents of bin.



## WATER

Water is usually already in the food and green garden scraps, but you might need to add a little extra water if you think it is too dry.



## MICROBES (microscopic organisms)

Microbes live in your garden soils and also in the air. (These help your plants to grow.) But there are LOTS MORE good composting microbes in finished compost, older good garden soils and animal manures. Composting breeds good microbes!



## GARDEN LIME

Buy a bag to fix occasional problems.

## METHOD

1. Place a layer of sticks that break easily (about as thick as your finger), or other coarse dry, carbon-rich materials (eg coarse woodchips) at the bottom to help keep some air there.
2. Microbes (bacteria, mould, fungi, yeast) are in your soil naturally. Add some finished compost, garden soil, or animal manure to your compost bin at the start and a few times along the way.
3. Add a thin layer of GREEN STUFF, then add a thin layer of BROWN STUFF- and keep going adding 3 parts 'GREEN STUFF' to 1 part 'BROWN STUFF.' This simply means: Most times you add foodscraps, grab a handful of dry leaves, or rip up some newspaper.



4. Use a garden fork, strong stick, or compost 'aerator' to do a little mixing of your materials, and to help add air. The 'good' (aerobic) microbes need air, (but too much air in a bin with holes in the sides ( in Perth) will dry out the contents and you will get ants and cockroaches!)



**Bin 1** Keep adding materials until Bin 1 is full. This may take a few weeks or even a few months at your place. When it is full, do some stirring, mixing, turning and leave the bin to mature. ***This will take from 6-12 weeks,*** depending on the materials, the heat and how well you have aerated it.

**Bin 2** Now start using Bin 2, starting with the sticks at the bottom and following the 3:1 formula as above. By the time Bin 2 is full, the mature compost in Bin 1 may be ready to use! (If it is not ready, then stir some more and wait a few more weeks.) Just dig it out as you need it. **There's no need to move the bins.**

**Don't leave foodscraps outside the bins; they will attract rats or mice.**

**If you have had the lid off, take care to replace it before it rains.**

## If these things happen...

If it looks dry, it IS too dry, so add a little water!

If you have ants, then it is probably too dry, so add a little water.

If it seems too wet or slimy, mix in dry materials such as dry leaves, woodchips, or strips of cardboard.

If you have tiny little flies (called vinegar flies), add a handful of Garden Lime to reduce the acidity.

If you have cockroaches, add a handful of garden lime and mix up the compost.

If something seems 'not right' add a few shovels of old soil.

If it SMELLS BAD, it probably hasn't got enough air, and not enough carbon, or is too wet. Mix it up a bit (ie add air), add some 'BROWN STUFF' and leave the lid off for a while (let some water evaporate).

**Fruitfly** If you have fruitfly in your fruit trees, DON'T put the affected fruit in your compost bin or you will breed more fruitfly. (You will have to send this fruit away in your general rubbish bin.)

**Maggots** If you see maggots (the babies of flies) in your bin, add a handful of garden lime, cover with a few shovels of soil, and **don't open the lid for 10 days**. The maggots will hatch into flies but they will die when they can't get out of the bin. **If this happens, don't let one little batch of maggots put you off composting!**



*Fly maggots with a few pupae*



*Vinegar/ferment fly, really about as long as this dash --.*



*Mediterranean fruit fly, the fruitfly we have in WA really about this long ----.*