

TWIN BIN COMPOSTING

Follow this RECIPE and you will:

- enjoy the magic of turning your food scraps, dry leaves, weeds etc. into fantastic fertiliser!
- feel good about not sending your foodscraps to landfill



'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 about ready to use in your garden.

BUY 2 round BINS with solid walls, with NO little holes or trapdoors. Australian-made (from recycled plastic) RELN Gedye 220L compost bins are highly recommended. (\$53 in Bunnings) *If you already have a bin with holes and trapdoor, seal them with blu tak or duct tape.* Once you've got your bins + a garden fork or compost aerator + a bag of garden lime, you'll have free compost forever!

GETTING READY... Choose a handy place in your backyard - easy to take your kitchen scraps to, and close to where you will use your compost.

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

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

'GREEN' STUFF *relatively rich in nitrogen*

- Fruit and veg scraps of any colour, raw or cooked
- Teabags
- Coffee grounds
- Green weeds
- Fresh grass clippings
- (optional) a little cow, sheep or chook 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 in the contents of bin.

+ WATER

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

+ MICROBES

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 with air mixed in breeds good aerobic microbes!

+ GARDEN LIME

Buy a bag and add a little if problems arise.

Rob Gulley & Brenda Conochie of GREENSERVICES.com.au. If you are following these directions but are still having problems, contact us and we will try to sort things out by email or phone. brenda@greenservices.com.au OR SMS 0428 711976 and we'll call you.

METHOD

1. Start with a layer of sticks that break easily (about as thick as your finger), woodchips or bark to help keep air there.
2. Add some finished compost, garden soil, or animal manure at the start and a few times along the way. This helps build up the necessary microbes.
3. Add a thin layer of GREEN STUFF, then a thin layer of BROWN STUFF. Keep going with about 3 parts 'GREEN' to 1 part 'BROWN' eg Most times you add foodscraps, add a handful of dry leaves, or rip up some newspaper.
4. Use a garden fork, strong stick, or corkscrew compost aerator to do a little mixing of your materials, and to help add air.

Bin 1 Add materials until Bin 1 is full - a few weeks to a few months. When full, do some stirring and mixing and leave it to mature. This will take 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 should 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. No need to move the bins. If you have plenty of materials on hand, you might want to add a 3rd bin.

If these things happen...

- If it looks dry, it IS too dry, so add a little water!
- If you have ants, 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 spadefuls 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 - carefully to shut before it rains!



Vinegar/ferment fly. It's about 2mm long. If you see these flying around your compost, it just means your mix is a bit acidic. Nothing to worry about - just add a little garden lime!



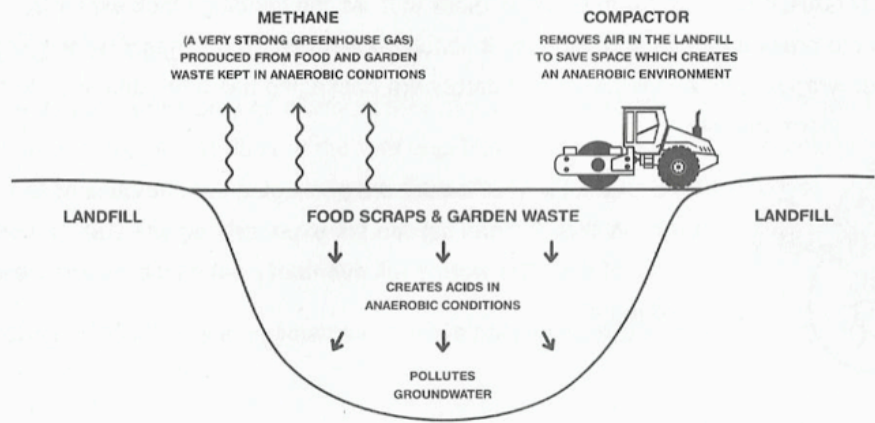
Mediterranean fruitfly (that live here in WA). About 4mm long. If fruitfly have laid eggs in your fruit (on trees) and you can see the little larvae (grubs) DON'T put that fruit in the compost bin or you will breed more fruitfly. (Put this fruit in your rubbish bin.)



If you see maggots (the babies of blowflies) in your bin, add a handful of garden lime, cover with a few shovelfuls of soil, and don't open lid for 10 days. They'll hatch into flies but 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!

**WHY YOU ARE
HELPING OUR PLANET
BY COMPOSTING OR
WORMFARMING!**

What Happens To Food & Garden Scraps In Landfill?



WORM FARMING

Worm farming turns a lot of food* waste into a small quantity of very rich fertiliser. It's a good choice for people who have only got small courtyard type gardens and no lawn clippings etc.

**All food scraps are OK except meat and dairy foods. Don't put too much citrus or onion in at once.*

YOU WILL NEED:

- **A home for your worms:** Some people have set up wormfarms in old baths or other containers but many find a well-designed plastic wormfarm very convenient.
- **A shady spot** outside or maybe in your laundry. (No direct sun or maximum 2hrs morning sun)
- **A 'wet blanket' for the worms:** Make a blanket the size of your wormfarm, from old towel, rug or natural carpet OR buy a ready-made Worm Blanket from your hardware. You keep this damp most of the time to keep the worms moist and cool.
- **Worms!** Get them once you have prepared their home! If friend or neighbour can spare you some, that's great. If not, buy at least 1000 worms. (Box of 1000 worms: \$50 at Bunnings, Worm Affair brand.)

IF YOU BUY A WORM CAFÉ it comes without worms. It has a full instruction book and a block of coir (coconut fibre.) If you use You Tube, here's one about setting up a worm Cafe.

[youtube.com/watch?v=0mL7hbNjZw8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0mL7hbNjZw8)

- Soak the coir block in about 7L of water for about 15 mins, breaking it up by hand.
- Set up bedding in the first basket (the one above the 'Tank') with the cardboard then the wet coir.

- **Spread your worms out** on the bedding and cover with blanket then put the lid on and let them settle in. (They will eat the coir and cardboard) for a couple of days before giving them foodscraps.
- **Pull blanket back** and add chopped up foodscraps, but only cover about half the area at a time. Don't let food build up; over-feeding can mean uneaten food goes rotten and smelly. If this happens, stop feeding for a few days and gently dig around a bit to aerate the foodscraps.
- **When the tray is full**, add a second tray so that worms can wriggle up into it to get new food scraps. Make sure that the bottom of the new basket is touching the food below, so that the worms don't have to jump the gap! Check again after a few weeks. This will help protect your worms in a heat wave. And so on...

USING YOUR WORM TEA & CASTINGS

Drain the 'Worm tea' from the Collector Tray (Tank) regularly as it's more potent when fresher. Water it down about 10:1 and feed your favourite plants and the ones that look like they need some extra help! The easiest way to make the most of the 'castings' is to add a handful to a bucket of water and use them as you use the worm tea.

TIPS FOR HEAT WAVES

In hot weather, you can keep foodscraps in the fridge until you are ready to feed them to the worms. During heatwaves, if your worms are outside you can help them keep their cool by burying plastic bottles of frozen water in the food under their blanket.

Consider treating them to the safety and cool of your laundry when leaving for a summer holiday.

