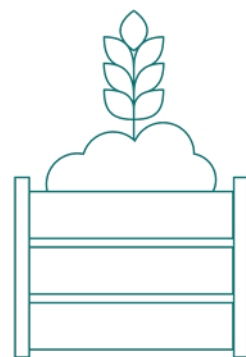


TIPS & GUIDANCE FOR HOME COMPOSTING

With the upcoming interest for home compostable applications, here is our guide on how to successfully home compost.

This will not only ensure a high quality compost, but will also provide the optimal conditions for your home-compostable certified application to disintegrate and biodegrade within its expected timeframe.

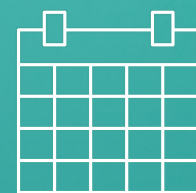
WHY HOME COMPOST



Home composting is the most environmentally-friendly way of dealing with kitchen and garden waste, plus it produces compost that can be used as an excellent soil improver.

WHEN TO COMPOST

Composting can be done all year round, as and when suitable materials are generated in the garden or home.



However late summer to early winter is the peak time for making compost.



WHAT TO HOME COMPOST

GARDEN WASTE



Green: Grass clippings; soft, leafy plants including annual weeds; fruit and vegetables, uncooked kitchen waste; selected pet waste/bedding

Brown: prunings and hedge trimmings (ideally shredded), woodchip, leaves, paper and card (torn up or shredded), straw, plant stems

ACCELERATORS AND ACTIVATORS

Nitrogen based products are sometimes added where green waste is in short supply. They contain high levels of nitrogen (a nutrient found in green waste), but should not be necessary if green waste is plentiful.

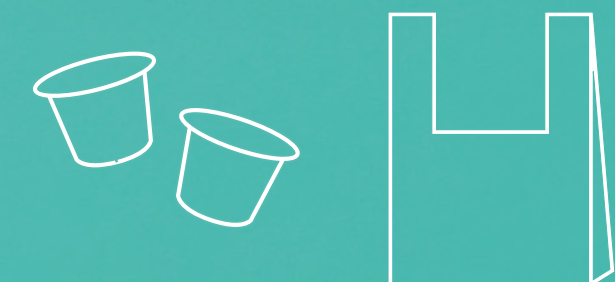


It is also possible to purchase activators containing carbon (a nutrient found in brown woody waste); these are aimed at composting grass clippings or other green waste where there is insufficient brown waste.

LIME

People sometimes think you need to add lime to the compost heap, but there is no need to do so.

HOME COMPOSTABLE PLASTIC



HOW TO HOME COMPOST

LOCATION

- Ensure the location is not exposed to extremes of temperature and moisture, as the micro-organisms (bacteria and fungi) that convert the waste work best in constant conditions.
- Choose your location in light or full shade.
- If possible have an earth base location, which allows drainage and access to soil organisms.
- If you have to compost on a hard surface, it is recommended to add a spade-full of soil to the compost bin.



NOTE

Bins retain some warmth and moisture and make better compost more quickly, but even an open heap (not enclosed in a bin) will compost eventually. Any of the compost bins on the market should produce compost as long as they exclude rain, retain some warmth, allow drainage and let in air.

Bins less than 1 cubic m (1.3 cubic yd) in size are much less effective than larger ones.

RATIO COMPOSTING MATERIALS

- Try to have 25~50% soft green material (e.g. grass clippings, annual weeds, vegetable kitchen waste, or manure): this will feed the micro-organisms.
- The remainder should be woody brown material (e.g. prunings, wood chippings, paper, cardboard, straw or dead leaves).
- The bacteria and micro-organisms that produce the compost function best when the balance of green and brown materials is correct.
- Avoid letting any one material dominate the heap - especially grass clippings, as these can become a slimy, smelly mess on their own.
- Kitchen waste and grass clippings are best mixed with brown woody material, as they tend to be wet and easily compacted, excluding air.
- We would recommend no greater than 10% certified home compostable packaging (look out for the logo!) in the heap, in order to achieve optimum biodegradation of the packaging.



TURNING THE HEAP

- Turning the heap generates aeration which is necessary for composting to occur.
- If the heap is too wet or becomes compacted, then the composting process is slower as less air is available.
- Ideally, place a lot of composting materials on the heap in one go, and turn it periodically (perhaps every month) to introduce air. Failure to turn the heap is probably the main cause of poor results.
- Many gardeners are unable to fill the heap in one go, as they accumulate waste gradually. Because of this, home-made compost is seldom as perfect as municipal compost, but it is still effective.
- Remember to keep the heap moist in dry weather – turning will give you an opportunity to assess the moisture level.



WHEN IS THE COMPOST READY

- Garden compost can take between six months and two years to reach maturity. Mature compost will be dark brown, with a crumbly soil-like texture and a smell resembling damp woodland.
- It is unlikely that all the material in the heap will be like this, but any remaining un-rotted material can be added to the next batch of composting materials.
- Enjoy as pure garden compost or mix with soil as an enhancer.

THIS GUIDE IS BROUGHT
TO YOU BY

BIOME
BIOPLASTICS

INTELLIGENT PLASTICS,
NATURALLY

Learn more about our work at biomebioplastics.com