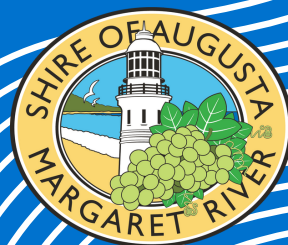


Compost Bins

A guide to successfully setting it up



Composting is nature's way of recycling - a process of turning natural scraps like food scraps, leaves and paper into nutrient-rich compost to help your garden and soil thrive. The bacteria, fungi, insects and worms in compost support healthy plant growth, which helps offset greenhouse gas emissions.

How to get started

- 1 Select a flat location in your garden that is shady in summer and has good drainage. Bury the bin at least 10cm into the soil to keep pests out. You can also cover the base with a layer of fine wire mesh to prevent mice and rats getting in.
- 2 Place a first layer of shredded newspapers, dry leaves and small twigs. This will ensure good aeration in the compost. Add a layer of small twigs, egg cartons and/or dry leaves to aerate the compost
- 3 Add activators such as compost from an old heap, animal manure (not dog or cat poo), blood meal and/or organically rich garden soil. These activators contain composting bacteria and will help start the composting process. Add water.
- 4 Alternate between thin layers of 'brown' and 'green' layers. Try to add two parts of 'brown' materials for each part of 'green'. Add water as needed to keep the compost moist.
- 5 Use an aerator to turn your compost every one to two weeks to speed up breakdown. Keep an eye on your compost and make sure it's not too dry or too wet.
- 6 Once your compost is dark and rich with a crumbly and smooth texture that smells earthy and woody, it's ready to use! Compost is a great soil conditioner that adds lots of nutrients and helps your garden retain moisture.

What can I put in my compost bin?

- ✓ Vegetable and fruit scraps
- ✓ Tea leaves and plastic-free tea bags
- ✓ Coffee grounds
- ✓ Crushed egg shells
- ✓ Paper and cardboard
- ✓ Leaves, twigs, grass trimmings, straw and other garden waste
- ✗ Meat, dairy products and pet poo should not be added to avoid pests and parasites.



Troubleshooting

- Smelly compost? It might have too much water, poor drainage or lack of aeration. For a quick fix, add garden lime and aerate. Add more brown material to absorb moisture.
- Pests? Ants = too dry (add water and green material). Flies/maggots OR rats/mice = inappropriate ingredients (make sure lid is secure, avoid meat and dairy, cover maggots with layer of soil). Cockroaches = too acidic (turn compost to aerate and add green lime to raise the pH back up to neutral).