

## Troubleshooting

If you follow the balanced “recipe” for compost you should have no problems. But if you do, try these quick-fixes!

**Smell:** A bad smell can be a sign of poor air circulation – give your compost a turn and add some coarse material like twigs.

**Too dry:** If your heap is dry throughout, turn it and wet it. Add lawn clippings or other fresh green waste and cover.

**Damp but not composting:** Your heap needs nitrogen. Turn it and mix in some fertiliser or fresh lawn clippings.

**Pests:** If your heap is attracting pests remove any meat or fatty foods from the heap and/or cover with soil, leaves or sawdust. Remember meat and cooked foods are best left out of compost heaps (use a bokashi bucket to compost these materials).

## The end product

In an ideal world the end product would look like potting mix. If it's not quite that perfect it doesn't matter. As long as most of the material has broken down and the compost resembles soil, it will be ready to be added to your garden.

It's a good idea to save some of the coarser material from your compost to help start your next compost heap!

## Bokashi Buckets

Bokashi buckets are a great alternative to large compost bins. They have the advantage that they can compost cooked food and cooked/uncooked meat and fish.



With the bokashi system micro-organisms ferment kitchen wastes inside an airtight bucket. Within just 7 to 14 days waste is fermented and ready to be dug straight into your garden!

- ✓ Fast – speeds up the composting process considerably
- ✓ Composts cooked food and cooked/uncooked meat and fish
- ✓ Inexpensive – average household will use a \$1 worth of micro-organisms a week
- ✓ Requires less space than a regular compost bin & will even work indoors

For more information on Bokashi composting see Council's 'Bokashi Buckets' brochure or [www.zingbokashi.co.nz](http://www.zingbokashi.co.nz).



For more information on waste minimisation, rubbish & recycling visit Clutha District Council's website: [www.cluthadc.govt.nz/rubbishandrecycling.htm](http://www.cluthadc.govt.nz/rubbishandrecycling.htm) or contact Council on 0800 801 350.

If you have any suggestions or comments about waste minimisation please let us know.



Clutha District Council

# Home Composting



- ✓ Reduce the amount of waste going in your wheelie bin
- ✓ Improve the health of your garden



[www.cluthadc.govt.nz/rubbishandrecycling.htm](http://www.cluthadc.govt.nz/rubbishandrecycling.htm)



## What is composting?

Composting is a natural process in which organic materials such as garden and food waste decay into a rich, soil-like material. This end product can be added to your garden to improve soil health.



## Why compost?

- ✓ It's great for the garden – improves soil health meaning healthier plants, yummiier veges and less need for fertilisers.
- ✓ It reduces the amount of rubbish going in your green-lidded wheelie bin (meaning less waste is sent to landfill).
- ✓ It's inexpensive & easy to do.



## What can be composted?

**Greens** (high in nitrogen)   **Browns** (high in carbon)

- |                       |                     |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| - vegie scraps        | - dry leaves        |
| - fruit scraps        | - twigs             |
| - coffee grounds      | - bark              |
| - tea leaves and bags | - egg shells        |
| - lawn clippings      | - paper             |
| - plant clippings     | - cardboard         |
| - flowers             | - untreated sawdust |
| - seaweed             | - straw             |
| - manure              | - wood ash          |

Both kitchen and garden materials compost quicker when chopped into smaller pieces. Paper & cardboard are best soaked in water before composting.

## Choosing a bin

There are a variety of different options available when it comes to choosing a bin for your compost.

The important thing is to find a setup that suits you, your property, budget and the amount of waste you will be composting.



Why not make your own bin? You can use a netting frame wrapped around wooden stakes or use bricks, concrete blocks, old tyres or wood. Just remember to provide holes for air circulation.



If you would prefer to buy a compost bin, you should be able to pick one up from most hardware stores.



## What can't be composted?

- meat & fish
- bones
- fats or cooking/salad oils
- large pieces of wood
- treated wood
- diseased plants
- plant material with residues of chemical sprays
- invasive weeds & weeds that have gone to seed
- dog or cat waste

Meat, fish and cooked food can be composted using bokashi buckets (see overleaf).

## Making compost

For a good working compost heap you need a good balance of four basic ingredients; **greens**, **browns**, water & air.

1. Locate your bin in a sheltered and level spot that has good drainage and easy access. Avoid locations that receive full sun.
2. Dig over the site before placing your bin. This will encourage worms to make your compost "home".
3. Start the heap with coarse material like twigs or partly decomposed material from your last compost heap to help with drainage and ventilation.
4. Keep the amount of **greens** similar to the amount of **browns** with no more than 2 parts green to 1 part brown. Too many lawn clippings especially can prevent a heap from composting well.
5. Keep the heap covered with a lid or old carpet to help keep heat in and pests out.
6. Make sure your heap is kept moist but not too wet.
7. Mix, stir and "fluff" the compost once every month or so. This aerates the heap, exposes fresh materials and redistributes the active micro-organisms and helps speed up the composting process.
8. Once your bin/heap is full, cover it and leave it to mature. It's a good idea to have two heaps or bins going at any one time – one resting and one active.
9. The end product - see overleaf.