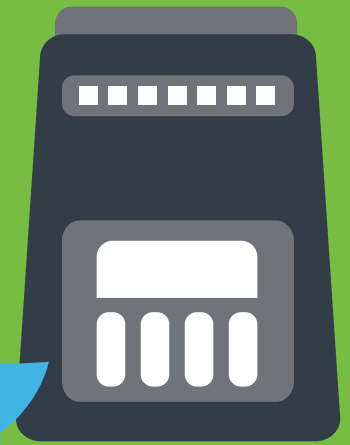


# COMPOSTING

## Quick start guide



Composting is a natural way of recycling that keeps food scraps out of landfill and returns their nutrients to the soil. Composting breaks down food into a rich material that enhances the soil and makes your garden beautiful and fruitful.

- 1 Choose your composter location** - Choose a location which is flat, well-drained and sunny. Try to find a convenient location that you won't mind walking to regularly.
- 2 Alternate layers** - Start with a layer of coarse materials (like twigs) to allow for drainage and aeration. Cover this layer with leaves. Then simply alternate between layers of greens (nitrogen-rich material) and browns (carbon-rich material).
- 3 Add kitchen and backyard waste** as they accumulate - It's handy to collect scraps in a kitchen caddy, but an old ice cream container works just as well. Whenever you add food scraps or garden waste, be sure to top it with a layer of browns. You need about 30% greens and 70% browns. If you do not add browns, your compost will be wet and break down more slowly.
- 4 Continue to add layers** until your bin is full - The bin contents will shrink as they begin to decompose.
- 5 Maintain your compost bin** - To get finished compost more quickly, check your compost bin and make sure the following conditions are met:
  - When you add fresh material, give it a little mix with the layer below.
  - Materials should be as wet as a rung-out sponge. Add dry materials or water - whichever is needed - to reach this moisture level.
  - Mix or turn the compost once a week to help the breakdown process and eliminate odour.
- 6 Harvest your compost.** Your first batch of compost should be finished around six months after starting your bin. Finished compost will be dark, crumbly and smell like earth. You shouldn't be able to see any of the original materials. The finished compost will end up at the bottom of the bin. To harvest the compost take the bin off and place it into its next location. Around a third of the bin will be ready to use. Take the top two thirds off with a garden fork take and place back in the bin, leaving your lovely pile of compost ready to go.
- 7 Use your compost.** Use your compost as top dressing for flower beds and at the base of trees and shrubs. Mix compost in with garden and flower bed soil. Use as a soil conditioner when planting or transplanting trees, flowers and shrubs by filling the hole with half compost and half soil.

### Top tip!

Collect and store dry leaves in the autumn so you can use them in your compost year round.

The Environment Centre is here to help with your composting questions and problems. For more online inspiration check out:

Compost Collective: [www.compostcollective.org.nz](http://www.compostcollective.org.nz)

Planet Naturals Composting Guru Guide: [www.planetnatural.com/composting-101](http://www.planetnatural.com/composting-101)

Huw Richards YouTube Channel: [www.youtube.com/user/HuwsNursery](http://www.youtube.com/user/HuwsNursery)



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# What stuff to compost

## GREEN MATERIALS



CHOPPED FRUIT & VEGGIE SCRAPS



COFFEE GROUNDS & TEA LEAVES



COOKED RICE & PASTA



HAIR & NAIL CLIPPINGS



EGGSHELLS



GRASS & PLANT CLIPPINGS & CHICKWEED

## BROWN MATERIALS



DRY LEAVES



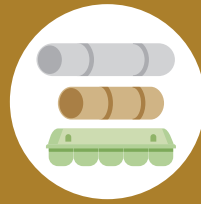
WOOD CHIPS



SHREDDED PAPER



SAWDUST & WOOD SHAVINGS



KITCHEN & TOILET ROLL TUBES & CARDBOARD



STRAW & HAY

30%  
GREEN  
MATERIALS



70%  
BROWN  
MATERIALS