

earthworm watch

Get Composting

A compost bin provides a habitat for earthworms and helps recycle your vegetable peelings, tea bags and garden waste into nutritious fertiliser for your garden. Adding nutrients to your flower and vegetable beds can increase the number of earthworms and health of your soil.

Where to put your compost bin

Find a spot in your garden where you can site either a plastic compost bin (many councils offer discounted bins) or build a compost bin using wooden pallets or similar.

Place the bin directly on the ground so that earthworms and other soil animals can easily enter and water can drain away. You can add some fine chicken wire to the base to stop rodents getting in.

Adding to your compost bin

An even mixture of soft, green, nitrogen-rich material and dry, brown, carbon-rich material produces the best compost. Add the material in layers and cover the bin to keep rain out.

What to compost

Green, nitrogen rich material	Brown, carbon-rich material
Grass cuttings	Shredded cardboard and paper
Vegetable and fruit scraps (except citrus fruits)	Straw and hay
Tea bags and coffee grounds	Prunings and hedgetrimmings
Annual weeds	Sawdust

What not to compost

Diseased plants
Cooked food scraps
Dog and cat poo
Disposable nappies
Perennial weeds e.g. bindweed

Earthworms for a better Earth!

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You can mix the compost occasionally to aerate it and speed up decomposition – this also means you can see what earthworms and other animals are living in the bin!

When is the compost ready?

Compost is ready to use on your garden or allotment when it is dark brown, with a crumbly soil-like texture and a smell resembling damp woodland. It can take between six and 18 months to be ready to use.

Compost earthworms

The earthworms *Eisenia fetida* and *Dendrobaena veneta* love the warm, moist environment of a compost heap with its plentiful food. They eat their way through your kitchen and garden waste, turning it into compost. Other types of earthworm may also be found in your compost heap, especially as it becomes mature.

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