

COMPOSTING - THE ORGANIC WAY

A compost heap is an untidy mound of dumped garden debris which over the years will sprawl across the garden becoming more unsightly. However a carefully designed, properly constructed compost bin can convert garden and organic garden waste into a rich brown spongy substance which is a source of humus containing all the nutrients your garden plants need, so less waste for the wheelie bin, less trips to the tip and a healthy chemical-free feeding system for the garden.

How to start:-

Decide on a site which is open to all the elements. The bins should be free-standing to promote air circulation and open to direct sunlight. They can be screened by trellises of ornamental or fruiting vines or hidden by decorative shrubs. Ideally three bins should be constructed, one complete and being distributed, the second nearing completion and the third in the process of being made. The bins can be made from wood, stone, brick or concrete. Leave plenty of gaps for air but line them with chicken wire to prevent the contents from spilling. The millions of bacteria that consume the compost must be able to breathe. A bin is capable of reaching a temperature of 53°C / 160°F within 48 hours.

The compost is made gradually as and when the materials become available, it may take a week or a year. Build it as a multi-layered sandwich i.e. green vegetable matter, soil or manure, then green waste followed by bonfire ash topping it off with a layer of earth. What goes into your compost is a secret between you and your bin, but take guidance from nature, for example a natural forest floor is made of leaf fall, bird droppings etc.

Your compost can contain lawn clippings, green weeds, dead flower heads, vegetable leaves, potato peelings, the contents of the vacuum bag and the scrapings from bird cages or the family rabbit or guinea pig hutch, which are wonderful activators and as effective as the commercially produced ones. The same being for animal manures such as pig, cow or farmyard. Use as many ingredients that are available to you and turn the compost weekly. Generally avoid animal remains as these will attract scavengers and avoid woody waste and hedge clippings as they take too long to decompose.



Happy Composting.

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