

HOW TO

MAKE & MANAGE GARDEN COMPOST

Veteran gardeners swear by compost as it's great for adding to their garden to help replanting, to keep soil healthy and it's an environmentally smart way to use garden and household waste. You may choose to purchase or make a compost bin or opt for a pile depending on your garden size and compost material available.

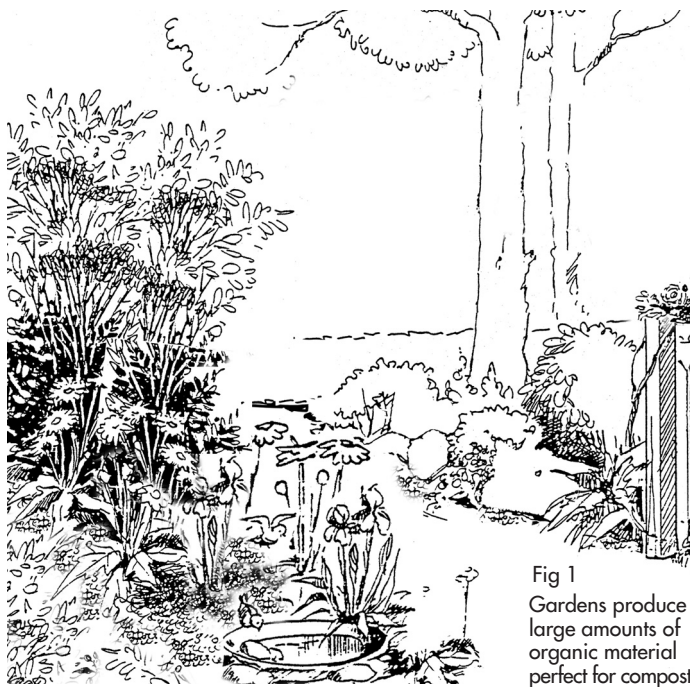


Fig 1 Gardens produce large amounts of organic material perfect for compost.

NOTE: Worm farms are ideal for small properties. One worm farm is enough to compost the kitchen scraps of an average sized family. The worm castings make great garden compost and the liquid can be used as a natural fertiliser.

TOOLS

- Shovel / fork
- Rake (to level the compost base)
- Compost bin (this can be bought or made yourself)

MATERIALS

- Garden and household waste

SAFETY

- Always keep tools and materials away from children.
- Read the instructions before beginning your project.
- never pile up compost materials near a timber fence - lawn clippings especially can generate enough heat to catch fire.

Although every care has been taken to ensure that the information and advice given in this guide is authoritative no legal liability is accepted for such information and advice.

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STEP 1

Choose a well drained level site near your garden.

STEP 2

There are many compost bins worm farms available to help contain and manage your compost, although a compost pile maybe more appealing if you have a large garden. You can make your pile directly on the ground with some wood material as a frame (Fig 2).

STEP 3

To make your compost, use the organic materials found in your garden, such as grass clippings, leaves and weeds. Adding a few shovels of soil will also help get the pile off to a good start (soil adds decomposing organisms). Avoid excessive quantities of onion skins (worms don't like them) and weeds that spread by runners or bulbs such as oxalis or couch grass.

STEP 4

Now that you have your materials you must manage the compost moisture and air intake, both vital for effective decomposing. If conditions are too wet, anaerobic microorganisms (those that can live without oxygen) won't decompose as effectively as the aerobic organisms (those that can not live without oxygen) won't decom. Bad odors are more likely to occur if the pile is saturated, so you may like to monitor moisture levels and punch holes in the sides of the pile for aeration.

STEP 5

The pile will heat up and then begin to cool as fungi and bacteria grow and eat the waste.

STEP 6

Start turning with a shovel or fork when the pile's internal temperature is uncomfortably hot to touch.

STEP 7

During the composting season, check your bin regularly to assure optimum moisture and aeration are present in the material being composted.

STEP 8

If you turn over materials every second day, you should produce compost in less than 4 weeks. Turning every other week will make compost in 1 to 3 months. Finished compost won't produce heat, it should also smell sweet, be cool and crumbly to the touch.

Fig 2 Compost piles are suitable for larger gardens.

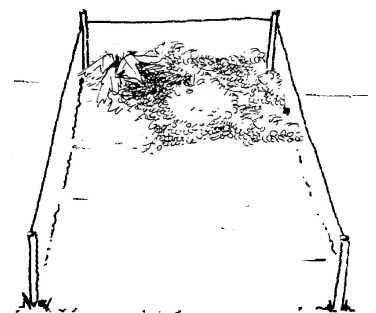
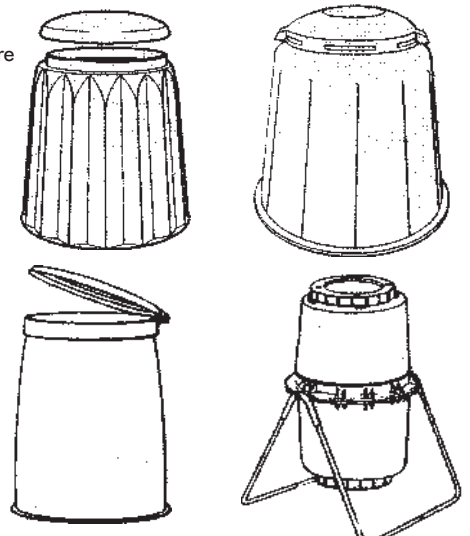


Fig 3 Compost bins are available in a variety of styles.



For further expert advice consult the qualified team members at your local Bunnings Warehouse.