



Composting – It's easy

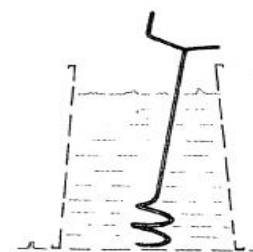
Kimbriki Eco House & Garden

Approximately 40-50% of household waste (by weight) is food scraps and garden materials which can be composted. Use this valuable resource to enrich your garden and your health. Play your part to reduce the pollution caused by methane gas and liquid 'leachate' produced by any food scraps and garden materials when buried in landfill.

Getting started

Ideally book in for a Composting Workshop at the Eco House and Garden at Kimbriki. Book online at www.ecohouseandgarden.com.au. If you can't do a workshop, here's some tips to get you started.

You can purchase Tumbleweed compost bins and turning tools at Kimbriki Eco House & Garden or most hardware and garden centres, e.g. New Leaf Nursery, Powderworks Rd, Ingleside



Use the A.D.A.M Principles while composting

- A – aliveness** compost is a 'living creature' full of worms and healthy microbes.
- D – diversity** mix in a variety of ingredients, e.g. food scraps, dry leaves, fine woody mulch, grass, hair, herbs etc. Diversity (variety) is the spice of life!
- A – aeration** aerate your compost regularly with a spiral mixing tool, minimum of once per week.
- M – moisture** keep compost moist at all times.

Setting up the bin

- Position the bin in a well drained place (sun or shade is ok).
- Put a layer in the base of the bin, about 200-300mm (4" - 6") deep, of high carbon material, i.e. finely chopped woody mulch, leafy twiggy materials or 'Forest Fines' purchased from Kimbriki.
- **Water this layer well.**
- Add 2 or 3 shovels-full of rich compost, or lovely black, alive soil from your garden. This 'seeds' your compost with the aliveness that does all the work.

1. Step-by-step success

- For every addition of food scraps, **add the same amount** of 'forest fines' or chopped small woody twigs and leaves, i.e. 1 bucket of food scraps to 1 bucket of mulch.
- **Mix** with a spiral tool – check that the entire heap is moist.
- Food scraps must not be left exposed on the surface. **Always cover the surface** with a thin layer of 'forest fines' or chopped small woody twigs and leaves as this reduces flies. Then cover the surface with a Tumbleweed blanket or hessian sack to keep the heap **moist and dark**.
- **Add other ingredients** regularly e.g. manures, vacuum contents, hair, herbs, weeds, grass, soil.

- Add a teaspoon of dolomite (Tumbleweed Worm Farm and Compost Conditioner) weekly, to **balance acidity**.
- When **bin is full** it needs to mature for 6-8 weeks. Keep this maturing bin moist and mix it. Add a little dolomite and pelletised manure weekly.
- Start a new bin for your continuing supply of fresh food scraps.

2. Using compost

- Compost is ready to use when it is dark and smells earthy (no sharp ammonia smell).
- Place compost around the DRIP-LINE of plants (the most active feeding zone) and cover with mulch.
- Keep compost away from the trunk of plants.

What about a worm farm?

If you have only food scraps and no garden prunings, consider a worm farm.

You can buy worm farms from Kimbriki Eco House & Garden, some local councils, hardware and garden suppliers.

Compost problem solver

Below are three of the most common problems people have with their compost.

Problem 1 SMELL

- Remedy**
- Increase AERATION.
 - Add more coarse material.
 - Mix the heap more regularly with spiral mixing tool.
 - Add a handful of dolomite (Tumbleweed Worm Farm and Compost Conditioner).

Problem 2 NOT HEATING UP

- Remedy**
- Add more NITROGEN material - e.g. manures, young grass clippings, blood and bone, etc.
 - Check MOISTURE level - (dry heaps don't heat up!) add more water when mixing.
 - Mix the heap more regularly with spiral mixing tool.
 - Add a handful of dolomite, (Tumbleweed Worm Farm and Compost Conditioner).

Problem 3 ATTRACTING VERMIN

- Remedy**
- Put small wire mesh (e.g. snake and mouse mesh from a hardware store) on the ground under compost bin, or place a piece of flat galvanised metal sheet on ground (drill 50 or more drainage holes) and place bin on top of metal sheet.
 - Always cover the surface of the heap with a Tumbleweed blanket or hessian sack or something similar and keep the lid on.
 - Mix the heap more regularly with spiral mixing tool to increase aeration (vermin do not like to be disturbed!).
 - Keep the heap moist (vermin do not like a damp environment!).
 - Add a handful of dolomite (Tumbleweed Worm Farm and Compost Conditioner).
 - Reduce the amount of cooked meat and bread being added to the heap.
 - Note: for more information on rodent control, refer to our handout, 'Rodent Control Ideas for Compost Bins'.

Happy Composting!!

Check out the three minute video on the Northern Beaches Council Website that run through the steps of feeding and maintaining your Compost: <https://www.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au/services/rubbish-and-recycling/waste-reduction/composting-and-worm-farming>

For more information
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