

Mini Compost Heap

A compost heap is a good way of recycling unwanted plant material and certain items of organic domestic waste. Ideally two containers should be used for composting, one that is being filled with fresh organic material and another that has been filled with composting material which has gone through the process and is ready to be used on the garden. It may not be possible for you to construct one or more conventional size compost heaps in your garden, but you can make a mini compost heap and see how organic waste products are broken down naturally to form wonderful, dark, nutritious compost.

What can be composted:

- uncooked vegetable peelings
- tea bags
- crushed egg-shells
- cut grass from the lawn
- annual weeds
- shredded newspapers
- old unwanted plants but not those with woody stems

What not to compost:

- thick-rooted perennial weeds
- woody plants
- weeds with seed heads
- cooked food leftovers
- meat and dairy products as these can attract vermin (rats and mice)



What do we need to start?

- Wood for frame
- Hammer and nails
- Drawing pins
- String/cord
- 2x2 litre clear plastic bottles
- Scissors
- Rotting leaves and garden waste
- Some garden soil

Instructions:

1. Make a wooden 'U' frame that is free standing - (see picture).
2. Use the scissors with care and cut the top and bottom off a clear 2 litre plastic bottle. Cut the resulting cylinder down its length to produce a plastic sheet. Do the same with the other plastic bottle.
3. Use the drawing pins and pin the plastic sheet to the wooden 'U' frame.
4. Fill the frame with a mixture of moist leaves, old plants, vegetable waste, grass and soil in layers. A small amount of compost with some worms from an established compost heap will help to get your mini heap working. Put a folded, damp newspaper or a strip of old carpet on top of this mixture and leave it in a dark, warm place for 4 to 6 weeks. After this time check your mini compost heap to see what has happened. Occasionally mix the material with a kitchen fork; don't let it dry out; keep it in the dark and away from any frost. After a couple of months, the original plant material and soil etc should be unrecognisable and transformed into rich, dark, garden compost containing a lot of worms.