

Why Compost?

Organic waste is a large part of the District's rubbish. You can help reduce that volume by composting your kitchen and garden organic waste. Composting is simply a method of speeding up natural processes of decay, and returning valuable nutrients to the soil.

The Gear to make good compost doesn't have to be expensive or sophisticated. Manufactured compost bins are neat, efficient, covered containers that fit into a small space. Or you can build compost bins from available materials. Compost bins should be bottomless, and placed on bare ground. Locate in a lightly shaded, well drained, north facing, sheltered site.

Put in organic materials at 25 parts of "Browns" to 1 part of "Greens".

"Browns" are high in carbons: dried leaves, sawdust, wood shavings, hay, straw, vacuum cleaner dust, egg shells, wood ash, shredded paper and newspaper.

"Greens" are high in nitrogen: vegetable and fruit scraps, tea bags, coffee grounds, lawn clippings, hair/fur, blood and bone, seaweed, chopped weeds (less noxious varieties).

Leave out meat scraps, dairy products, large bones, food packaging, plastics, treated wood products, noxious weeds, diseased plant material, thick woody stems, coal ash, cat and dog faeces.

Get started with a bottom layer of coarse, twiggy plant material, followed by alternate layers of "green" and "brown" wastes, and a layer of soil or mature compost to act as a microbial starter.

To speed up the composting process:

- ▶ Chop or shred materials, and turn the heap frequently.
- ▶ Turning ensures a flow of air, which is vital to maintain the aerobic system.
- ▶ Keep moist - never dry, or dripping wet. If it becomes too wet, add more "brown" material. Cover the heap in steady rain.

It is ready to use after two or three turnings, and when it looks like potting mix. Use it wherever good organic fertiliser is needed mulch with it, or dig it in. Mulching conserves moisture and warmth, protects from frosts and pests, suppresses weeds, adds nutrients and increases production, stabilises soil and prevents compaction.

Trouble Shooting

- ▶ Problem: Inadequate mixing of materials especially fine with coarse.
- ▶ Solution: Break up the matted layers with a fork or pass through a shredder.
- ▶ Problem: Contents warm and moist, but only in the middle.
- ▶ Reason: The volume is too small to create its own insulation and heat. The siting and type of container are both important heat factors.

- ▶ Solution: Add new materials to increase volume. Moisten if necessary. Situate in a shady, sheltered area. Use a plastic container.

- ▶ Problem: Contents are slimy and smelly.
- ▶ Reason: Poor aeration, too wet, too many "greens", perhaps presence of meat, fish, fat or cooking oil.
- ▶ Solution: Turn compost as soon as possible. Add "browns" or high carbon, absorbent materials (eg. straw, dry leaves, sawdust). Cut back on moisture and cover the heap. Don't compost meat, fish or fat.

- ▶ Problem: Contents are dry in the middle and decomposition is minimal.
- ▶ Reason: Inadequate moisture possibly using too much branchy/twiggy material.
- ▶ Solution: Turn and moisten contents. Add green herbaceous material. Chop or shred coarse materials.

- ▶ Problem: Contents are moist, non-odorous and structureless.
- ▶ Reason: Lack of "greens".
- ▶ Solution: Add "green" materials eg. Grass clippings, poultry litter, kitchen scraps. Turn contents.

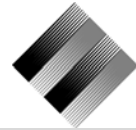
Composting and your Environment

How the environment benefits from home composting:

- ▶ Composting creates more fertile usable soil.
- ▶ The amount of water pollution, gas release and odour from landfills is decreased.
- ▶ Fewer garden chemicals are required, because compost-rich soil grows healthier, more productive plants.
- ▶ Reduce volumes going to landfill.

For further information, please contact the Western Bay of Plenty District Council Ph 571 8008.

Council acknowledges the support of the Auckland Regional Council and Palmerston North City Council in the production of this brochure.



**Western Bay of Plenty
District Council**

TAURANGA – HEAD OFFICE
CAMERON ROAD
BARKES CORNER
PRIVATE BAG 12803
TAURANGA 3143
PHONE (07) 571 8008
FAX (07) 577 9820
FREEPHONE 0800 WBOPDC (926732)

TE PUKE LIBRARY & SERVICE CENTRE
JELLCOE STREET
TE PUKE
PHONE (07) 573 9862
FAX (07) 573 6728

KATIKATI LIBRARY & SERVICE CENTRE
MAIN ROAD
KATIKATI
PHONE (07) 549 0119
FAX (07) 549 0935

OMOKOROA LIBRARY & SERVICE CENTRE
McDONNELL STREET
OMOKOROA
PHONE (07) 548 2643
FAX (07) 548 2941

WAIHI BEACH LIBRARY & SERVICE CENTRE
WESTPAC COMMUNITY CENTRE
WAIHI BEACH
PHONE (07) 863 4573
FAX (07) 863 5749

INFORMATION VALID AT TIME OF PRINT 01/06

*Your guide to
composting at
home*