

Three Make-at Home Compost Bins

1. Upcycle an old cardboard carton to create an inexpensive compost bin for your garden.

One of the key principles of successful composting is to just get started. Yes, you should learn about nitrogen and carbon and the ideal ratios so that you can accelerate the decomposition process. But if you are spending more time studying the principles of composting than actually just doing it, you'll never get anywhere. One of the quickest ways to start is by composting in a plain old cardboard box.

A cardboard box makes an excellent compost bin as a starter container. While not really suitable for indoor composting, using a cardboard box to begin your composting outdoors will allow you to keep the pile contained while it is small. As an added benefit, it will slowly break down from the moisture and weather, providing additional carbon as the pile grows.

Place your box where you want your compost pile and begin filling it with leaves, untreated grass clippings and non-meat food scraps.

The compost process is accelerated as cardboard will attract worms. It turns out that worms eat cardboard. When the cardboard is pressed against the ground and is wet from the moisture, it provides an excellent cover and food source for the worms. They cannot live exclusively on it but it is a food source. It can take up to a year to get compost this way, but there is not great effort to it.

2. Drill a storage bin to create this DIY compost bin. It is easy and practical.

This very simple compost bin gives you the opportunity to try composting without too much commitment, cost, or space needed. It will debunk some of your ideas about composting.

You need a 20 to 30 gallon storage bin (the darker the color the better) and a drill

Yes, that is all you truly need to make this bin. You can borrow a drill if you do not have one of your own. Storage bins are around \$5 at your local mass merchant store, but if you have one that has a crack or hole it and no longer functions properly as a storage bin, you can just use that one for free.

Drill holes all over your storage bin. Remember to drill holes on the bottom to allow for water drainage. You want all four sides and the bottom to be covered with random holes.

The lid should have holes drilled into it, as well. This will allow for air to circulate.

Put some dirt in your compost bin. You can grab any random dirt you can find start with.

Add any fruit or vegetable scraps you may have. Peelings and cores are great. Plant clippings and trimmings work wonderfully, too.

Anytime you add contents to the compost bin, you will want to give the bin a shaking. This will help aerate the compost and allow it process faster and more efficiently. Simply attach your lid securely on the bin and rock the bin from side to side. Then tilt it front to back.

Now you have a bin that can easily be put anywhere, even on your patio. Compost does not stink, despite the rumors you have heard. As long as you add the proper ingredients, it actually smells kind of sweet. So place your bin where it is the most convenient for you to use everyday.

Many compost piles will take about a year to provide good compost for use. This bin allows that process to go much faster. You can get good compost in as little as 4-6 months.

3. Use milk crates to make a vertically stacked compost bin. You need three stackable milk crates.

Color of milk crates is your choice, but black will hold more heat from the sun and work faster. Cut pieces of your screen/mesh or weed barrier fabric and hot glue gun them inside the milkcrates to cover the side holes. This will keep your compost inside and prevent pests, but air and water will circulate. Old window screen can be used instead of weed barrier.

To keep out pests, like squirrels and birds, you need to make a lid for your stack. A wood board with a handle. Since the composter will be resting on the earth directly, it does not need a base. A coat of varnish or spray coating on the lid will protect the wood from the elements.

Lay 2 layers of newspaper at the bottom of your milkcrates to stop the compost from falling through, stack them, and put the lid on. Your composter is now ready!

How to use a Stacked Composter:

Start adding the kitchen waste to the composter (top crate, A)

When the Crate A is 3/4 full, switch the Crate A with middle crate, B. And start adding the materials in Crate B, which is now at the top.

When the Crate B gets filled 3/4 and the ingredients in Crate A has shrunken.

You can again switch the Crates A and B.

When the middle crate gets almost filled 3/4, empty the middle crate into Crate C

And start the process all over again.

The final contents of Crate C starts shrinking and thus more materials can be added from the middle crate to Crate C.

When Crate C gets filled 3/4, empty the contents onto the garden before starting to fill Crate C again.

At this point the contents of Crate C has decomposed completely.

Sieve the contents of Pot C and you get perfectly good non-smelling compost.

The larger pieces that are left after sieving can be added to the Crate at the top for further decomposing.

Keep the compost little damp by sprinkling water in the upper Crate occasionally.

The whole process takes around 90 days.

TIPS FOR COMPOSTING

- You want your compost to remain moist like a sponge. This provides optimum conditions for the articles to decompose.
- If possible, place your bin in an uncovered area to allow rain to moisten the compost. This will help conserve water.
- Never add any food that has had salt or butter added to it.
- Never add any dairy products or meats to your compost. If it grew in the ground then you can add it.
- Add a glass of water to your compost each time you add waste. This will help maintain the desired moisture level.
- Adding worms to your compost really helps the process along.
- The smaller the articles you add to your compost, the faster they will decompose. So try cutting, peeling, and trimming into smaller pieces before adding.



Compost Box



Compost Crates



Compost Storage Bin