

How to make a mini Composter

This is a fun way to learn how garden compost is made. Although it is cheap and easily accessible, it's not practical for generating quantities of compost for a large garden! However, it is excellent for engaging in a year round, light-hearted project: providing small muscle exercise and a variety of activities over a period of time. It could inspire you to create an even bigger compost heap next year!



Windowsill Composter

What you will need:

- 2 litre plastic bottle, rinsed
- Scissors, stick tape, nail or craft pin, paper towel
- Small handful each of small twigs, dead leaves, garden soil, shredded card/non glossy paper
- Large bowl of compost ingredients: grass clippings, dead flowers, teabags, kitchen vegetable and fruit scraps
- Water bottle/sprayer
- Tray to sit mini composter into



What you will need



Step 1 Cut off top 5cm

Step 1 Cut the top 5cm off the top of the bottle, keep this 'lid'. Tape over the cut rim to prevent the ragged edge causing injury.

Step 2 Using the nail or craft pin, pierce approx. 15 -20 holes around the base and to the lower sides of the bottle.



Step 2 Pierce holes



Step 3 Compost starter



Compost ingredients

Step 3 Place the soil and leaves into the base of the bottle. Layer the small twigs on top of the leaves/soil. This is the 'compost starter' - natural micro-organisms in the soil, combined with the air allowed to circulate around the twigs will start to 'break down' the layers of compost ingredients to follow. Use a spray bottle to dampen the compost starter pile.

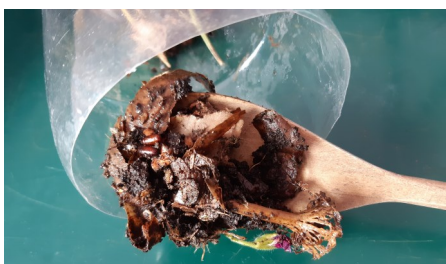
How to make a Mini Composter *continued*



Step 4 Layer materials



Step 5 Add 'funnel'



Step 6 Mix



Step 7 Continue stirring

Step 4 Start layering up the kitchen and garden waste materials collected. Use your fingers or scissors to scrunch/cut things into smaller 1 cm size pieces—this will help speed up the composting process.

Avoid adding all the same ingredient at once – layer like a lasagne! e.g. handful of grass clippings followed by handful of shredded eggshells, followed by handful of dead flowers. Never add dairy or meat items.

Step 5 Turn the 'cut off' bottle top upside down (remove the bottle screw top) and insert into the bottle composter, using it as a funnel to regularly add more water to the compost, keeping it just damp at all times.

Remove the funnel, cover the ingredients with a sheet of kitchen roll if preferred, this can help deter flies from gathering. Replace the funnel. Sit the mini composter on a leak-proof tray on a bright windowsill. The warmth from the sunlight will help speed up the composting process: varies from 10–16 weeks.

Step 6 The compost ingredients will quickly break down and reduce in size. Give the mixture a stir with a long handled spoon—this will aid with air circulation.

Step 7 Add further layers of compost ingredients, along with water, and return to the windowsill. As the compost 'makes', its volume continues to reduce in size. Keep adding more material until the 'made' compost almost fills the bottle.

Continue stirring occasionally with a wooden spoon until the compost is a crumbly soil like mixture. If there are any stubborn pieces of material that have not broken down, remove them and use them to start off your next mini bottle composter.

TIP If the compost gives off a 'smell' this could be because there is too much water in the bottle. Avoid over watering!

This fresh, ready to use compost, can be used to sow easy-to-grow seeds such as nasturtiums and marigolds in Spring, or use to top-dress (add to) the existing compost level on patio pots.



Fresh home made compost

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