Compost Awareness Week 2019

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Master Composter

www.carryoncomposting.com
Household Waste

- Food: 40%
- Plastics: 13%
- Paper: 10%
- Garden: 9%
- Nappies: 6%
- Other: 7%
- Glass: 4%
- Metal: 4%
- Electrical: 4%
- Textiles: 3%

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Compostable Waste

- Food: 68%
- Paper: 15%
- Garden: 10%
Waste Reduction should be the first priority

- While composting is important the first priority should be to reduce waste.

- This is a school compost bin showing some of the fruit and carrots provided as part of a Healthy Eating programme
Local Community Composting

You need not be alone:

- Community Composting is often perceived as only the composting of garden waste, on a small scale, with a voluntary workforce and minimal technical input
- Allotments or blocks of flats are ideal locations for community schemes.
- Food Composting at pubs, cafes, residential homes
"I don't have a garden"

- You don't need a garden to make and use your own compost.

- Composting technology has caught up with modern, compact living: there are bins for large and small gardens and courtyards as well as indoor wormeries and Bokashi bins which are totally sealed.

- Once the composting stage is over, you can add the compost to a window box, patio pots or use it on the garden.
## Something for everyone

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No outside space</th>
<th>Balcony only</th>
<th>Small Garden</th>
<th>Allotment/large garden</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bokashi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wormery</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plastic bin (Dalek)</td>
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<td>Green Cone</td>
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<td>Green Johanna</td>
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<td>Pallet or wooden bins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leaf mould</td>
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</tbody>
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*Balcony or no outside space: A combination of Bokashi and wormery could be used to process the maximum waste*

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Food waste composting

Compost heap or bin incl. hot composters such as Hotbin, Johanna shown under "cooked food" below

Uncooked vegetables

Wormery (not onion or citrus)

Trench, Sheet, Lasagne etc

Cooked vegetables, meat, fish, dairy & plate scrapings

Food composter e.g. Hotbin, Green Johanna, Joraform,

Green Cone Food Digester

Bohashi bins

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Garden Waste Composting

Mainly vegetables, flowers and annual weeds:
- Compost bin or heap
- Trench, Sheet, Lasagne etc

Autumn leaves:
- Leaf mould using bin or bag

Perennial weeds:
- Hot Compost, Drown or bag until dead then compost

Mainly grass:
- Grass Boarding

Wood incl. logs and tree stumps:
- Hugelkulture Mound, wood pile or shred & compost depending on size

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Composting

- Composting is the aerobic decomposition of organic matter to producing.
- Compost is rich in nutrients and is used as a soil conditioner, a fertilizer, which adds humus and humic acids to the soil.
Organic materials
Plants & Food scraps

Water + CO₂ + Heat

Air + Water
Microorganisms

Finished compost
Added to soil
Composting can be easy

- At the simplest level, the process of composting requires making a heap of wet organic matter such as leaves, grass, and food scraps, and waiting for the materials to break down into compost over after a period of 6 -12 months.

- Most people start with a low cost bin purchased through a scheme run by Get Composting for the local council.

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Uncooked kitchen waste

- To avoid smells and frequent trips down the garden to the compost bin it is advisable to have a kitchen caddy that can be kept indoors.
- There are a wide range of caddies available in plastic, pottery or metal.
- The plastic caddies can be easily cleaned by putting in the dishwasher.
Greens and Browns

- Organic material can be divide into Greens (high in nitrogen) and Browns (high in carbon)
- For basic composting an equal mix of the two is required
- If you go wrong it is easily corrected if the compost is wet and smelly mix in more Browns to dry add more Greens.

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Greens

- Grass cuttings
- Raw vegetable peelings from the kitchen
- Tea bags and leaves, coffee grounds
- Young green weed growth – avoid weeds with seeds
- Soft green prunings
- Urine (diluted with water 20:1)
- Comfrey leaves
- Nettles
- Animal manure from herbivores e.g. cows and horses
- Poultry manure and bedding
Browns

- Cardboard e.g. cereal packets and egg boxes
- Waste paper and junk mail, including shredded paper
- Bedding from vegetarian pets e.g. rabbits, guinea pigs – hay, straw, shredded paper, wood shavings
- Tough hedge clippings and woody pruning's (shred)
- Old bedding plants
- Sawdust & Wood shavings
- Fallen leaves can be composted but the best use of them is to make leaf mould
Browns can be saved for the winter or for batch composting
Other compostable items

- Hair
- Nail clippings
- Egg shells - crushed & washed (?)
- Natural fibres e.g. 100% wool or cotton
- Wood ash (in moderation)
Can but!

- Glossy magazines – although it is better for the environment to pass them on to your local doctors’ or dentists' surgery or send them for recycling

- Newspaper – although it is better for the environment to send your newspapers for recycling
Do not Compost

- Coal & coke ash
- Cat litter
- Disposable nappies

- Meat, Fish and Cooked food can be composted in a special food composter such as a Hotbin, Green Johanna or Joraform
Cold Composting

- Most people new to composting use a “cold composting” system adding material to the bin as it becomes available.
- Start with a few woody plant stems or small twigs on the bottom first as this will improve the air circulation and drainage.
- Add a layer of greens and browns at least 30cm deep.
- Mix the greens & browns- scrunched up cardboard packaging e.g. cereal boxes straw, woody pruning's, this helps create air spaces within the heap.
Oxygen or Aeration

- Oxygen is needed by microbes to breakdown the organic material.
- Oxygen is available in air spaces within the composting material
- Provided by:
  - Coarse material at base of pile – twigs, woodchips
  - Leaves, plant stalks, straw
  - Scrunched up cardboard, kitchen roll tubes
- Aeration methods to encourage decomposition
  - Insert sticks while building pile then pull them out later
  - Perforated drainage pipe
  - Sunflower or artichoke stalks
Or Stir/turn weekly using a fork or aerator
When is it ready?

- Cold composting may take a year - 18 months.
- Compost can be made in as little as six to eight weeks or a year or more using “Hot composting” and tumblers but this involves more time and effort.

- A simple test is to put a sample in a plastic bag, seal and leave for a few days.

- When opened it should smell pleasantly of compost and not be horribly putrescent
Harvesting the Compost

Harvest through the hatch or lift the bin of the composting material.

Return the top unfinished material to the bin to continue composting.
Finished product

- Moist, dark brown, earthy smelling
- Best left for a month or two to 'mature'.
- Don't worry if it is lumpy, sticky or stringy, with bits of twig and eggshell still obvious, it is quite usable.
- If necessary the compost can be sieved before use and any large bits put back into compost heap.
Using compost

- **Vegetable beds**: Spread or dig in. 1 wheel-barrow per 5sq.m.
- **Flower beds**: 5cm mulch or 10cm layer dug in before planting
- **Mulch**: Round trees and shrubs
- **Lawn feed**: Sieve and mix with sharp sand & spread up to 2.5cm thick
- **Top up pots and containers**: Top up
- **Compost tea**: Soak compost in water. Dilute liquid 1/10 as feed and add sludge to compost bin.
Use Compost Awareness week to help promote composting at home, on the allotment and in schools.

Further details on composting can be found at www.carryoncomposting.com