

# Directions for Composting

*Revised 10<sup>th</sup> April 2011*

## 1. **Place composter in a sunny position**

Ideal range: 122°-130°F (50°-55°C).

Higher temperatures, 130°-150°F (55°-65°C), will kill seeds and pathogens, but it's better not to go above these compost temperatures. These temperatures apply to the centre of the compost not the outside ambient temperature.

## 2. **Add compostable materials – USE 1/3 GREEN TO 2/3 BROWN to ensure a good finished product.** Add a handful of fresh topsoil to bring in new microbes. Special accelerents may be used but follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully.

Best to fill 'The Compost Creator' **HALF WAY**, and **DEFINITELY NOT MORE THAN 2/3 FULL**, as this reduces aeration and kills important microbes. Overloading with green materials, especially grass cuttings, makes the compost too wet, and **could damage your compost tumbler, as the weight would then exceed its working limits.**

## 3. **Tumble 'The Compost Creator' every 2-3 days** and whenever you add more. In fact you can give it a spin more often if you like, whenever you happen to be passing and feel the urge for exercise. The contents should all turn brown, moist and soil-like, and have an earthy smell in about 2-4 weeks, ready to put on your plants or vegetables. But you need to make sure you have the right mix of brown and green material.

**Ideal Composting Materials: (Note: Your Compost Creator is rodent proof)**

**Green** – Rich in nitrogen – 1/3<sup>rd</sup>

- Bread
- Cooked food
- Dairy products
- Egg shells
- Fruit and vegetables
- Garden/house plants
- Grass cuttings
- Raw meat and bones (sparingly)
- Tea leaves/bags
- Coffee grounds
- Weeds (not any that have gone to seed)

**Brown** – Carbon rich – 2/3<sup>rd</sup>

- Bedding from pet cages (rabbits etc)
- Feathers
- Hedge trimmings
- Paper and cardboard
- Straw and hay

- Wood chips and sawdust
- Dried leaves and grass

### **IMPORTANT – DO NOT ADD**

- Dog or cat litter or poo
- Ashes not from wood
- Nappies, glass, plastic, metal
- Any toxic materials
- Diseased plants or any gone to seed

### **Compost problems and solutions**

*What if your composting doesn't seem to be working?*

- **Could be too full** – Remove some material, add some soil and turn several times.
- **Check temperature** – Too cold? Move to a sunnier place or cover barrel with insulating material. Too hot? Move to a cool, shady, breezier area.
- **If nothing works** – **empty bin and start again** with step 1, mixing old and new materials.

### **Additional Composting Tips**

- **Worms help compost**
- **Breaking material** down before adding it will reduce composting time
- **Don't add too much meat or grass.** It can make the compost too wet and reduce aerobic bacterial growth. It will also make your composter too heavy to turn easily and could damage the structure.
- **Make compost tea** - nutritious plant food – add a little compost liquid to 4-8 litres of water – great for feeding fruit and veg.
- **Don't add paper with lead** based inks on it
- **Avoid repeatedly adding to the same compost batch** as it increases composting time
- **A little urine** is said to speed up the rate of composting, but is not compulsory