

# Home Composting & PREVENTING FOOD WASTE



# Composting Information

Research has found that up to 40 per cent of waste in an average household rubbish bin consists of food. You can reduce this food waste by planning your meals, shopping efficiently and by composting. This can help save you money and divert food from landfill.

Composting creates a free fertiliser for your garden that helps produce healthy plants, fruit and vegetables.

## Set up your kitchen:

- Place your fruit and vegetable scraps in your kitchen caddy.
- When the caddy is full, transfer the food waste to the compost bin in your garden.
- Remember to clean out the caddy regularly (it can be placed in the dishwasher).

## Set up your garden:

- Place the compost bin in a sunny spot.
- Start with a thick layer (15cm) of twigs or coarse mulch at the base for drainage.
- Add alternating layers of 'Greens' and 'Browns'.
- Sprinkle a little water on your compost heap to keep it moist (do not soak).
- In three to four months you'll have dark, crumbly compost to use on your garden. Wear gloves when handling or spreading compost.

### Greens:

- ✓ fruit and vegetable scraps
- ✓ garden prunings
- ✓ fallen leaves
- ✓ small amount of grass clippings/weeds.

### Browns:

- ✓ coffee grounds
- ✓ tea bags
- ✓ egg shells
- ✓ vacuum cleaner dust
- ✓ twigs and straw
- ✓ shredded and moistened pizza boxes
- ✓ newspaper
- ✓ egg cartons.

### DO NOT USE:

- |                  |                        |                                    |
|------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ✗ meat           | ✗ bones                | ✗ dead plants                      |
| ✗ dairy products | ✗ dog or cat droppings | ✗ magazines                        |
| ✗ grease and fat | ✗ bulbous weeds        | ✗ bleached or glossy office paper. |
| ✗ bread and cake |                        |                                    |
| ✗ large prunings |                        |                                    |

## Troubleshooting

### COMPOST IS NOT BREAKING DOWN:

- If the compost is taking too long to break down, it may have unbalanced 'green' and 'brown' layers; be too dry or not have enough air.

### COMPOST BIN IS SMELLY:

- There is probably too much fresh 'green'. Add some dry 'brown' material and aerate by turning the compost with a garden fork or turn the handle more often if you have a tumbling model.

### FLIES AROUND THE COMPOST:

- Try covering food scraps with a layer of soil, grass, leaves or newspaper.
- Ensure you are not adding meat or dairy products.

### SPIDERS UNDER THE COMPOST LID:

- Wear gloves and use the lid handle while checking under the compost lid.
- Cover food scraps with a layer of garden clippings or soil.

### MICE AND RATS IN THE COMPOST:

- Mice and rats are usually attracted after warmth and uncovered food. Build your compost on top of a fine layer of wire mesh to stop them getting in from below. Cover any obvious entry points and turn the compost regularly to deter them. You can also try setting traps around the bin.
- Council has provided compost bins that should be relatively vermin proof. Please provide Council with feedback if you are having issues with vermin.

### ANTS IN THE COMPOST:

- Ants, slaters and cockroaches are attracted to compost that is too dry. Gently moisten the pile by adding water. Deter insects by turning the pile with a garden fork.
- Do not add meat, dairy products, cooked or sweet things such as bread, cake or pasta.

MORE INFORMATION Visit the FAQ section at <http://whitehorsehomecompostingtrial.com.au>