

TRADITIONAL COMPOST BINS

These are the most common bins in Ireland - when used properly they produce very good quality compost

How do these types of composters work?

Traditional compost bins are best placed on grass or earth where insects and micro-organisms can decompose your kitchen and garden wastes. The rigid bin holds the composting materials and stops vermin and other animals getting in for a meal!

The important thing about these compost bins is a good start. If you get this then the composting process will manage the organic materials easily as long as the correct conditions are maintained. It must be moist and there must be some bulky items in it (e.g. branches, cardboard, etc.) so air can flow through it to get the composting process started properly.

When adding organic materials to the top of this bin don't forget your "Green" and "Brown" mix. Depending on the materials added, you'll usually get compost in 6 and 12 months. As fresher material is always at the top the more decomposed material is further down. **The most common problem with these bins is that people don't turn them enough.** It is a good idea every now and then to mix the materials about with a pitch fork - this helps air get into the pile which promotes composting activity! The finished compost at the bottom of the bin can be removed through the little door for use around your home.



Composters are always a dark colour such as black or dark green. Remember high temperatures in the composting bin speeds up composting. Dark coloured plastic absorb and retain more sunlight and heat than light coloured plastic. That's why you should always put these bins in a sunny spot!



These traditional composters have a large capacity when compared to other bin types. The most common size is 230 litres but larger units which have 900 litre capacity are available.

You can get compost bins from your local authority, usually at a discounted cost. Contact your Local Authority or visit their website to get more information. See

STOPFoodWaste.ie
for more details



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If you don't want to buy one - then you can easily make one yourself!

Composting is an ancient and well established practice for dealing with organic wastes. There are loads of different systems and designs. Building your own is a great option instead of buying a plastic composter. You can make one at very little cost and usually the materials can be found for free. The pictures to the right show two home made wooden bins.

One is made from used wooden pallets while the other is made using lengths of wood with some wire mesh. With these bins it is a good idea to cover them with plastic sheeting or old carpet to stop the compost pile getting too wet. Often, if you have space you can put 2/3 of these together which makes turning the composting materials much easier - this in turn speeds everything up. You add and manage these bins exactly the same as with the plastic bins - it's that simple!



What are the advantages and disadvantages of these systems?

Advantages	Disadvantages
Plastic bins are widely available through Local Authorities, co-ops and garden centres.	In the plastic bins it can be difficult to turn compost material with a garden fork. Aerator tools which have long handles to reach the bottom of the bin can help to eliminate this problem
Relatively cheap - either the DIY ones or the subsidised plastic ones supplied by local authorities	Removing compost from the bottom can sometimes be awkward. Often its best to remove the top layers, harvest the compost at the bottom and restart with the un-composted materials. For plastic bins, the entire bin can be removed to access the compost.
Plastic ones available in a range of sizes (between 220 and 900 litres available. DIY - make to your needs	As it has an open bottom in contact with the ground it can attract rodents. Adding wire mesh to the bottom of the bin can prevent this problem.

Building your own homemade compost unit ensures that you have the right capacity for the materials that want to compost.



For more details on all types of composters go to STOPFoodWaste.ie

