

BOKASHI COMPOSTING

Bokashi is a Japanese term that means “fermented”

How does this type of composting work?

Bokashi is a composting process that uses Effective Micro-organisms (EM) to ferment kitchen food waste in an airtight bin. EM is a combination of naturally-occurring bacteria and yeast that ferment organic wastes rather than putrefying it thereby avoiding unpleasant smells. All kitchen wastes including cooked food, bread, cheese and uncooked meats can be composted in this way.

The Bokashi system can be kept indoors. Ideally the system consists of 2 bins though one can be used perfectly well. Kitchen food waste is placed in layers in air tight bin and each layer of food waste is topped with a sprinkle of Bokashi bran. The waste is pressed down tight and the lid is kept on the bucket, thereby creating the anaerobic (no oxygen) conditions that the EM needs to thrive. The EM then begins to digest the food waste through a process of fermentation.



Bokashi buckets have a tap for letting off the liquid that leaches from the food waste during its digestion. This liquid can be gathered, diluted with water, and used as plant food.



When one bucket has been filled to the top, it should be left with the lid on to ferment for up to 3 weeks. During this time the second bucket can be used for new food waste. After 3 weeks, the food waste will have a pickled look and smell. At this stage, it can be removed and buried in the ground, a compost heap or a wormery (in which case the fermented waste should be wrapped in newspaper). The process of fermentation will ensure that the food waste does not attract vermin or pets to dig it up.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of this system?

Advantages	Disadvantages
Can compost all materials	Still require section of land to bury pickled material to allow decomposition to compost
Compact unit that can be put anywhere in your kitchen	Need to maintain a supply of bran – this is a continual cost

Cost:

€50 for a starter kit of bucket and Bokashi EM bran (enough to last roughly 1 to 2 months)
€8 for 1 kg bag of Bokashi EM bran

Prices change so check with your local supplier

