



# Welcome to composting!

By Kate

## What types of composter can I use?



Plastic compost 'Darlek' bin



Wooden pallet & post bay



Wormery—ideal for a small garden

## What can I put in the compost bin?

Most kitchen and garden waste can be added to your compost bin, the exception being wormeries which are designed for small scale food waste.

**Garden waste :** leaves, grass, garden clippings, wood shavings, sawdust, weeds (NOT perennial weeds ie dock/dandelion), prunings, straw, non glossy junk mail, hair, pet fur, old compost from pots, egg shells, horse manure.

**Kitchen waste :** vegetable peelings, coffee grounds, newspaper, scrunpled brown paper, shredded card board (no sticky tape) card eggboxes, loo rolls.

## What not to put in the compost!

Cooked foods, meat, pet food, plastic, metal, dairy products, coal ash, naturally toxic plants ie Rhododendrons, plastic tea bags, bindweed, dock and dandelion roots, brambles, mareetail, animal waste, plants already gone to seed, bread, oil.

## Getting the balance right

You need both GREEN (grass, weeds, kitchen waste) and BROWN (prunings, chippings, paper, card, dead leaves) material, aiming for 25 to 50% of green and the remainder being brown.

Turning the heap adds air—essential for composting to occur. If the heap is too compacted or too wet the composting process is much slower. Ideally turn the compost at least 3—4 times a year preferably more often.

A compost can take between 6 and 24 months to mature where the contents have broken down to a woodlandly scented crumbly dark brown soil like texture.

## Potential issues

Slow worms, bumble bees and ants sometimes see a compost as a welcome refuge and will move in.

Slimy stinky compost - can be caused by excess green material, heap too wet, not enough air (heap not turned) . Add chopped woody material, shredded card or paper and turn.

Dry and woody with little composting - usually too little moisture, add more green waste or horse manure.

Flies—good healthy composts don't produce flies—ensure that cooked food waste is not added and any kitchen waste is covered with garden waste.

Rats—they will be attracted to cooked food waste. Do not add in the first place, if done accidentally—remove as soon as possible.