

EM Bokashi

A welcome new way of starting compost. It is used mainly in the context of an indoor kitchen scrap collection, rather than a pile of greens and browns on your outdoor plot during the warm months of the year.

EM stands for "effective micro-organisms", these organisms are natural and not genetically modified. They have the facility of acting on kitchen scraps so that they ferment rather than putrefying. Instead of smelling like an un-emptied dustbin the container will have a slight smell as of pickled onions, the product is not slimy or unpleasant, and contains many plant nutrients. The process is also quick, and animal products such as meat scraps, cheese rind and fish bones etc. can be included without the finished product being at all interesting to rats or other vermin. This is obviously going to make collecting the kitchen scraps very much easier, as no sorting is required although large bones may not break down. The fermentation stage can even be done indoors in the kitchen in the special sealed bin. The bin, it must be said, is the main expense in setting up.

The method is approved by many countries and by many local authorities in this country, some of which run schemes where the kitchen waste from a whole council estate is collected and processed, and the resultant compost sold or used in municipal gardens. This represents a double saving, as there is the revenue from these sales and the reduction in land fill costs as well. As far as the individual householder is concerned there is the use of the compost plus the knowledge that you have done something to help the planet by saving landfill space and reducing methane

production or toxic leaching from putrefying tips. If everyone in Bridport could be persuaded to adopt this simple system the seagull problem would be solved immediately!

Briefly the process works like this - a supply of EM Bokashi (fermented sawdust compost starter) must be purchased, and a special sealed bin. This bin has a tap fitted, as, rather as with a wormery, the process produces a certain amount of liquid which can be used diluted as a fertiliser, or as a drain clearer, or as a septic tank sweetener. Layers of kitchen waste are interspersed with sprinklings of Bokashi, and a fortnight after the bin is full the contents can be dug straight into the garden. The scraps may still be recognisable, but they are free of harmful bacteria such as salmonella or e-coli, do not smell, and are not unpleasant to handle. Planting of new seeds, seedlings or plants can take place two or three weeks later. The product can also be inserted into potato trenches at planting time provided a 12cm space is left all round each tuber. It may also be forked into small holes near established plants but not touching them. Materials for this system can be purchased from:

Living Soil Co. at www.livingsoil.co.uk

12, Walhatch close,
Forest Row,
East Sussex RH18 5GT,

or supplies for both Bokashi and Wormeries from:

Wiggly Wigglers at

www.wigglywigglers.co.uk or

Lower Blakemere Farm,
Blakemere, }
Herefordshire HR2 9PX
telephone 0800 216990



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Information Leaflet 5 **Two Ways of Making Compost**

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Composting - Orthodox Method

The important thing to remember is to include "*Greens*" (Tea bags, grass cuttings, vegetable peelings etc.) and "*Browns*" (crushed egg shells and boxes, newspaper, toilet roll tubes, straw and hay, dry leaves and twigs etc.) and to create a balance between those so that the compost is not too slimy (Too many greens) or too dry (too many browns).

First, place a layer of "browns" in the base of the bin and include some twigs so that air can circulate, build this layer to about 6 inches. Then add a layer of greens of the same depth. Finish off with a layer of kitchen refuse. You can also add a layer of soil to introduce micro-organisms. Then continue the layering process until the bin is full, water and cover. You can turn the pile every now and then to increase aeration. It should be ready within 3 months.

The good thing about making your own compost is that it avoids wastage and is a good organic fertilizer and soil improver. Another added benefit is that by composting organic waste you are doing your bit to fight climate change! This is because organic waste sent to landfill is buried under other waste, excluding oxygen, and therefore produces methane which is a powerful greenhouse gas.

A perfect combination of greens and browns is usually a little more brown than green - as this provides air-pockets to let the material breathe and encourages the composting process. The green items will contain bacteria that will generate the initial heat that is required by the process. A healthy compost bin is a small living ecosystem.

By keeping a good mix of green and brown material you will provide the perfect conditions for a variety of mini-beasts, and can let them do all of the hard work.

Compostable Materials.

- Biodegradable waste (not meat or fish)
- Coffee grounds
- Cocoa shell
- Green waste
- Leaf mould
- Manure
- Spent mushroom compost
- Tree bark
- Egg shells
- Brown waste, paper and cardboard
- Fruit
- Vegetables

Leaves in large quantities (i.e.. autumn sweepings) should be composted separately to make lovely leaf mould. This can be done in black plastic sacks with plenty of holes punched through with a fork and well watered. It should take about two years for leaf mould to be produced.

Inorganic additives

- Loam
- Grit
- Urea
- Vermiculite
- Perlite

The above ingredients might be added to modify the texture of the compost to suit the needs of individual plants, or to lighten the heaviness of clay soils, for example.

A wormery is an efficient, easy and environmentally friendly way of converting ordinary garden and kitchen waste into solid compost, known to gardeners as 'black gold', plus a concentrated liquid plant food. Over millions of years, worms have evolved into fast and efficient detritivores. A detritivore is any organism, other than bacteria or fungi, which feeds on large bits of dead and decaying organic matter. The matter that is left behind by detritivores is further broken down by decomposers. Each worm eats and digests up to half its own body weight in waste every day, thus greatly decreasing the volume of the waste.

As a properly maintained wormery should be odour-free, there is no reason that a wormery cannot be placed right outside your kitchen door if necessary or desired. Indeed, vermicomposting is particularly suitable if you live in a flat without a garden, or if there is insufficient space in your garden for a conventional compost heap.