SINGLETON COUNCIL
COMPOST more

How to use your
Compost Tumbler

220 Litre

140 Litre

140 Litre Twin

Singleton Council | NSW Government | NSW Environmental Trust | NSW EPA | TUMBLEWEED your earth matters

Thank You for participating in Singleton Council's WaterWise Compost Gardens Program. This booklet will provide you with valuable information to make the most of your new compost tumbler.

Instructions for use

Turning the tumbler ensures that the different types of waste are well mixed , that moisture levels are even and most importantly, that the rotation process aerates the compost.

The microorganisms responsible for turning the waste into compost need oxygen to do their job.

Rotation of the compost tumbler can speed up composting and prevent unpleasant smells.

To turn the tumbler, place your hands inside the hand slots provided and gently apply pressure so that the tumbler rotates slowly downwards. Complete 3 to 4 rotations and finish the rotation process with the door facing upwards. This process should be repeated every 2 to 3 days.

When you wish to harvest your compost, stop adding new material to the compost tumbler for several weeks to allow time for the materials introduced last to compost. The door can be detached to allow easier removal of the compost.

A few final recommendations

- Refer to the list of compostable materials and follow the instructions it provides
- Try to maintain a balance between "green" and "brown" waste"
- Ensure that the compost is moist without being wet

To learn more about composting visit our website www.singleton.nsw.gov.au

The compost tumbler is not a toy. Keep the compost tumbler out of reach of children.

6 easy steps to compost tumbling

1. Choose a sunny position
2. Add small pieces of organic waste
3. Aim for 50% garden waste such as grass clippings and leaves* (carbon) to 50% kitchen food scraps (nitrogen)
4. For best results add a handful of soil or compost
5. Tumble every two days
6. Add 1 teaspoon of Compost Conditioner every week.

* Grass clippings and leaves can be replaced with shredded paper and cardboard to make up the 50% carbon

Add Compost Conditioner

Adding a teaspoon of compost conditioner neutralises acidity and balances the pH levels, helps soil bacteria preserve essential nutrients and increases the availability of nutrients for plants from the compost you produce. It also helps reduce odours and pest infestations.

Why make compost?

Making compost is the perfect way to recycle organic garden and kitchen waste into a highly nutritious soil conditioner.

It’s fun to do and it doesn't cost the earth.

The compost you make will help retain water in your garden's soil and efficiently deliver valuable nutrients to the roots of y our plants.

Composting also helps your household’s environmental impact by reducing methane producing landfill.

How is compost made?

Compost is made when micro-organisms feed on plant matter and break it down into smaller and smaller pieces. When the waste is fully decomposed it forms humus - or compost - a dark, soil-like material with a pleasant earthy smell.

Your Tumbler has been designed to provide micro-organisms with the ideal environment they need to compost your waste quickly, and with minimal effort from you.

While natural decomposition of organic waste takes a long time, composting with Tumbleweed Tumbler can take just four weeks. As it creates the perfect environment and provides the air, water and food that micro-organisms need to rapidly multiply and quickly break down organic waste.

Your Tumbler will generate heat. This is important because some micro-organisms only work when the temperature is elevated. The more micro-organisms you have working, the better your compost will be.

Choose the best spot for your compost tumbler

Find a sunny spot

Heat absorbed from the sun will help activate more of the micro-organisms.

Make it accessible

You'll need to turn your Compost Maker regularly. So place it where it is easy to access and use.

Place it on any surface

The ground does not need to be perfectly flat; it can even go on a hard surface such as concrete or pavers.

Only add organics

Micro-organisms eat organic 'food'. That means you should only put materials into your Compost Tumbler that were once alive. Lawn clippings, leaves, flowers, green prunings, vegetable scraps, eggshells and general garden waste are ideal; you can even use shredded newspaper and cardboard.

The smaller the pieces of waste, the faster it will decompose, so it's a great idea to run your mower over garden waste like leaves and dead flowers before you throw them into your composter.

Lawn clippings, which are small and quick to decompose, can be used to make mulch without any other ingredients. However, vegetable scraps, which contain a lot of water, should be mixed with drier ingredients. That's because if the water content becomes too high in your compost bin there may be insufficient air for the micro-organisms to work effectively. For the best composting results, aim for 50% garden waste such as grass clippings and leaves* (carbon) to 50% kitchen food scraps (nitrogen).

* Grass clippings and leaves can be replaced with shredded paper and cardboard to make up the 50% carbon.

What not to add to your compost tumbler

Twigs and large woody prunings are slow to decompose in any composting system. Meat, fish, fat, pet droppings and dairy products also decompose slowly and may cause odours.

Filling and tumbling your compost tumbler

You don't need to generate a large amount of organic waste or completely fill the Tumbler before you begin making compost.

However, whether you choose to fill the tumbler in one go or add to it slowly, you'll need to tumble it several times every two days. This will aerate the compost and encourage the micro-organisms to work efficiently.

Over time, the contents of your Tumbler will reduce as it decomposes so that a full tumbler of organic waste will produce about 25% of its volume as compost.

Your compost will be ready to use 4 to 6 weeks from the time you last 'fed' it.

Tumbling is easy

Tumbling your Compost Tumbler is easy. Simply use the deep grooves to place your fingers and rotate the drum. Turn the drum about 5 complete turns every second day. Be sure that the door is on the top when you have finished rotating the drum.

How to use your compost

Use it as mulch

Spread the mulch over the surface of your garden bed to a depth of about 5cm or more. This will prevent moisture loss and attract worms that will further enrich your soil.

Use it as compost

If your soil is predominantly clay, sand or generally in poor condition, dig the compost in to improve its quality and attract worms.

Trouble shooting

Problems usually occur when the micro-organisms that cause decomposition do not have the right working environment. Here are some common reasons why.

The compost is wet

Your compost should have the moisture content of a well squeezed sponge. If you've added too many vegetable scraps, which are high in water, your compost may be too wet and the micro-organisms may not be getting enough air. Aim for 50% garden waste (carbon) and 50% kitchen Food scraps (nitrogen).

To absorb excess moisture try adding ingredients such as torn scraps of newspaper or dry leaves. If this does not rectify the problem, you'll need to empty the bin and start again.

The contents in my bin are very hot

This is good news and a sign that the micro-organisms are doing their work. It will eventually cool down and produce compost.

Find out more

For more information and valuable advice on recycling organic waste, worm farming and composting, please visit: singletoncouncil.com.au (search for 'compost garden program'). Further tips and hints can also be found on the following websites;

- www.yourearthmatters.com
- www.environment.nsw.gov.au/households/composting.htm
- www.epa.nsw.gov.au/warr/SPD_ORG_Compost.htm

What can I put in my compost tumbler?

Aim for a 50:50 ratio of Green and Brown ingredients for your compost mix.

Green (Nitrogen)

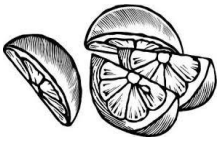
Algae, seaweed and lake moss
Fruit scraps
Coffee ground and filters
Hair
Lawn clippings
Manure (horse, cow, pig, sheep, goat, chicken, rabbit)
Tea bags
Vegetable scraps

Brown (Carbon)

Cardboard and paper (shredded)
Dryer lint
Eggshells
Leaves (trees and bushes)
Newspaper (shredded)
Sawdust and wood shavings (untreated wood only)
Straw and sugarcane mulch

Avoid

Ashes from coal or charcoal
Cat droppings or cat litter
Diseased plants
Dog droppings
Fish scraps
Lime
Meat, fat, grease, oils, bones
Weeds (gone to seed)



*This is not a complete list, please use as a guide only.