

# Home Composting Mini Guide

**Composting is the decomposition of organic material. Anything that has lived can be composted. A full list of materials is printed below. Over one third of household waste is compostable. Composting is easy. It reduces waste and returns nutrients to the soil.**

## **Materials that can be composted are listed below.**

Making compost right is a bit like baking a cake! The right mix of ingredients will produce excellent results. Brown materials (carbon rich) are slow to rot but essential to the process. Green materials (full of nitrogen) are compost activators and need to be balanced by a larger amount of brown material.

The length of time it takes to compost material varies depending on the mix of green and brown material, moisture and air content. It could be ready in 3-4 months but it can take up to a year or more to mature.

The aim of composting is to turn organic waste into crumbly compost. When compost is ready for use there should be hardly any trace of the parent material except for egg shells and it should crumble simply through your fingers.

## **My compost is slimy & smells!**

Too much nitrogen material such as grass. Add more brown ingredients, see list.

## **My compost is taking ages to decompose!**

Be patient - Turn the material regularly to speed up the process.

## **My compost smells like rotten eggs!**

Not enough air. Turn the contents every day for a week, then regularly for a month.

## **The compost material is damp and soggy**

The material added may be too wet or the composter is located in too cool an area. Add a batch of materials such as weeds or hedge trimmings.

## **There are a lot of flies in the composter!**

Put a layer of newspaper or grass cuttings at the top of the composter daily, or leave the lid open during the day.

## **Will rodents be attracted to the composter?**

Composting shouldn't attract rodents into your garden. Most gardens are home to rats and mice. Place the composter in an open area away from streams or other water areas. Plant lavender or rosemary close by as their scent detracts rodents. If you are worried place the composter on a layer of chicken or birdcage wire & turn up the edges.

**Remember wash your hands after gardening or handling compost.**



### ✓ Add Greens

- ✓ Grass Clippings
- ✓ Kitchen food scraps - uncooked
- ✓ Old vegetables and vegetable peelings: e.g. Carrot, onion, potato skins
- ✓ Old fruit and fruit peels: e.g. apple cores, banana skins
- ✓ Manure - cow, sheep, horse, pig, rabbit, guinea pig
- ✓ Old bedding plants
- ✓ Green weeds
- ✓ Dead flowers
- ✓ Seaweed
- ✓ Tea leaves/Teabags
- ✓ Plant shrub prunings and trimmings

### ✓ Add Browns

- ✓ Old straw or hay
- ✓ Bark or woodchips
- ✓ Autumn leaves
- ✓ Dry brown weeds
- ✓ Hair - human or pet
- ✓ Hoover bag contents
- ✓ Coffee grounds/ filters
- ✓ Paper/soft cardboard - shredded
- ✓ Corrugated cardboard - shredded
- ✓ Newspaper - shredded
- ✓ Eggshells - rinsed and crushed
- ✓ Ashes from a wood or peat fire

### ✗ Do Not Add

- ✗ Meat (raw or cooked)
- ✗ Fish bones/ fish scraps
- ✗ Grease, oil or fatty foods
- ✗ Dairy products
- ✗ Coal ashes/ barbecue coals
- ✗ Brightly coloured card/ paper with coloured inks
- ✗ Disposable nappies
- ✗ Cat, dog or human excrement
- ✗ Glass
- ✗ Plastics
- ✗ Metals
- ✗ Textiles
- ✗ Pernicious weeds (e.g. couch grass, creeping buttercup).

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# Dealing with Organic Waste

## 1. Preventing food waste should be your first port of call.

How many times have you thrown out half a stale loaf, excess cooked pasta, rice or fruit that's gone off. Believe it or not, one third of all the food we purchase is wasted. This costs the average Irish householder **€700** per year. To learn some useful tips on how you can prevent food waste, visit [www.stopfoodwaste.ie](http://www.stopfoodwaste.ie) [www.brownbins.ie](http://www.brownbins.ie) or [www.limerick.ie/council](http://www.limerick.ie/council)

## 2. Use a Home Composter in combination with your Brown/Organic bin

If you live in a population area of greater than 1,500 or your collector provides you with a brown bin you must dispose of your food waste in the brown bin provided or alternatively home compost your food waste. All other householders should compost their food waste or if this is not feasible food waste may be placed in the general/landfill bin.



### ✓ Use the brown bin for:

- ✓ All cooked food plate scrapings meat bone fish scraps
- ✓ Bread doughs and pastas
- ✓ Spoiled dairy products grains and cereals
- ✓ Food soiled paper

### ✓ Continue to use the home compost bin for:

- ✓ Vegetable and fruit peelings
- ✓ Tea bags
- ✓ Coffee grains
- ✓ Cut flowers

## 3. Dealing with Green Garden Waste

Green waste is organic waste sourced from the garden or from landscaping activities. It generally includes grass, hedge cuttings, bushes, tree toppings, prunings or other woody material. As landfill diversion targets are enforced green waste is generally not accepted at landfill. Green waste should be separated out from other waste and choose one or more of the following options to deal with it:

- ✓ Use a compost bin or compost heap and compost in your own garden.
- ✓ Cut your grass regularly. Where possible, invest in a mulching mower.
- ✓ Hire a shredder and shred hedge clipping and branches and make your own bark mulch.
- ✓ Bring your green waste to the closest green waste facility.
- ✓ For large quantities of green waste, hire a skip from a permitted waste contractor. The permitted contractor will ensure the green waste is composted or recovered.

## Green Waste Facilities in Limerick

Kilmallock Recycling Centre	063 98836
Mungret Recycling Centre	061 305 720
Newcastle West Recycling Centre	069 78610
Gortadroma Waste and Recycling Centre	069 82339

Please contact individual facilities for opening hours and conditions of acceptance.

**Be aware, burning green waste (or waste of any kind) is illegal. It is prohibited under the Waste Management Acts and the Air Pollution Act to burn green waste. There are exemptions for certain agricultural practices ONLY but strict conditions apply.**

## 4. Useful Web Addresses

Limerick City & County Council: [www.limerick.ie/council](http://www.limerick.ie/council) • Southern Regional Waste Management Office: [www.srwmo.ie](http://www.srwmo.ie) • Smarter Travel [smartertravel.ie/](http://smartertravel.ie/) • [www.stopfoodwaste.ie](http://www.stopfoodwaste.ie) • [www.foodwaste.ie](http://www.foodwaste.ie) • European Recycling Platform: [www.erp-recycling.ie](http://www.erp-recycling.ie) • An Taisce Green Schools: [www.greenschoolsireland.org](http://www.greenschoolsireland.org) • ECO UNESCO: [www.ecounesco.ie](http://www.ecounesco.ie) • EPA: [www.epa.ie/researchandeducation/education](http://www.epa.ie/researchandeducation/education) • Limerick Clare Energy Agency: [www.lcea.ie](http://www.lcea.ie) • Sustainable Energy Authority of Ire: [www.seai.ie](http://www.seai.ie) Heritage Council: [www.heritagecouncil.ie](http://www.heritagecouncil.ie) • Fairtrade: [www.fairtrade.ie](http://www.fairtrade.ie) • Irish Peatland Conservation: [www.ipcc.ie](http://www.ipcc.ie) • Crann: [www.crann.ie](http://www.crann.ie) • Irish Wildlife Trust: [www.iwt.ie](http://www.iwt.ie) • Birdwatch Ireland: [www.birdwatchireland.ie](http://www.birdwatchireland.ie) • Irish Prevention of Cruelty to Animals: [www.ispca.ie](http://www.ispca.ie)

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