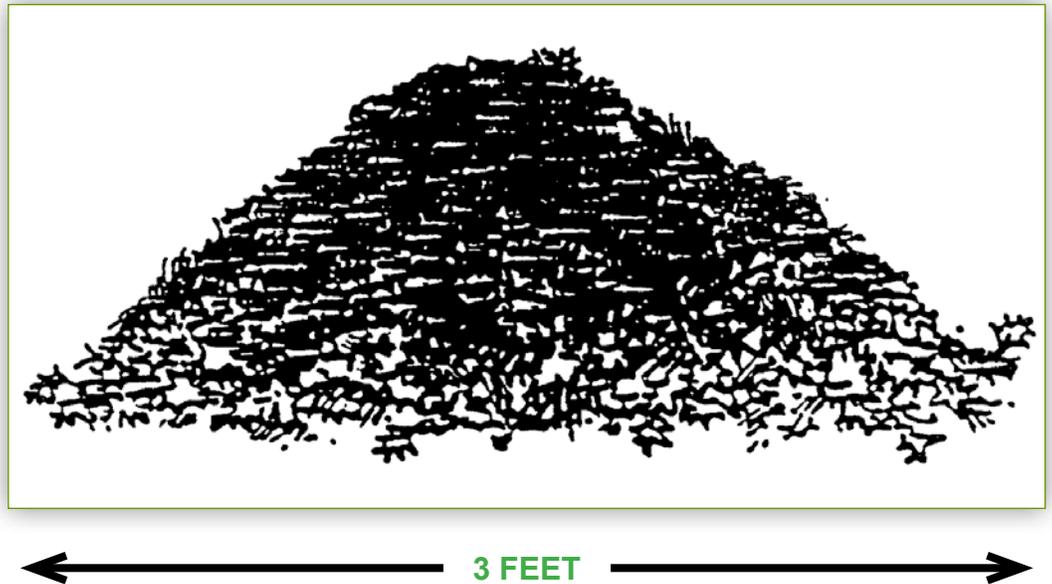


Compost Mound

Yard wastes can be composted without a bin if you don't mind the appearance of an uncontained compost mound in your yard. The only costs are your time and work.

What You Need

- shovel or pitchfork
- work gloves



Building a Compost Mound

Find a good location and pile your yard waste in a mound about 3 feet x 3 feet x 3 feet (1 meter x 1 meter x 1 meter). If you cover the pile with a layer of soil, it will keep in moisture for the microorganisms and soil animals working to make compost.

Adding Wastes

Add wastes as they become available. Non-wood materials such as grass clippings and garden wastes work best.

Maintaining Your Compost Pile

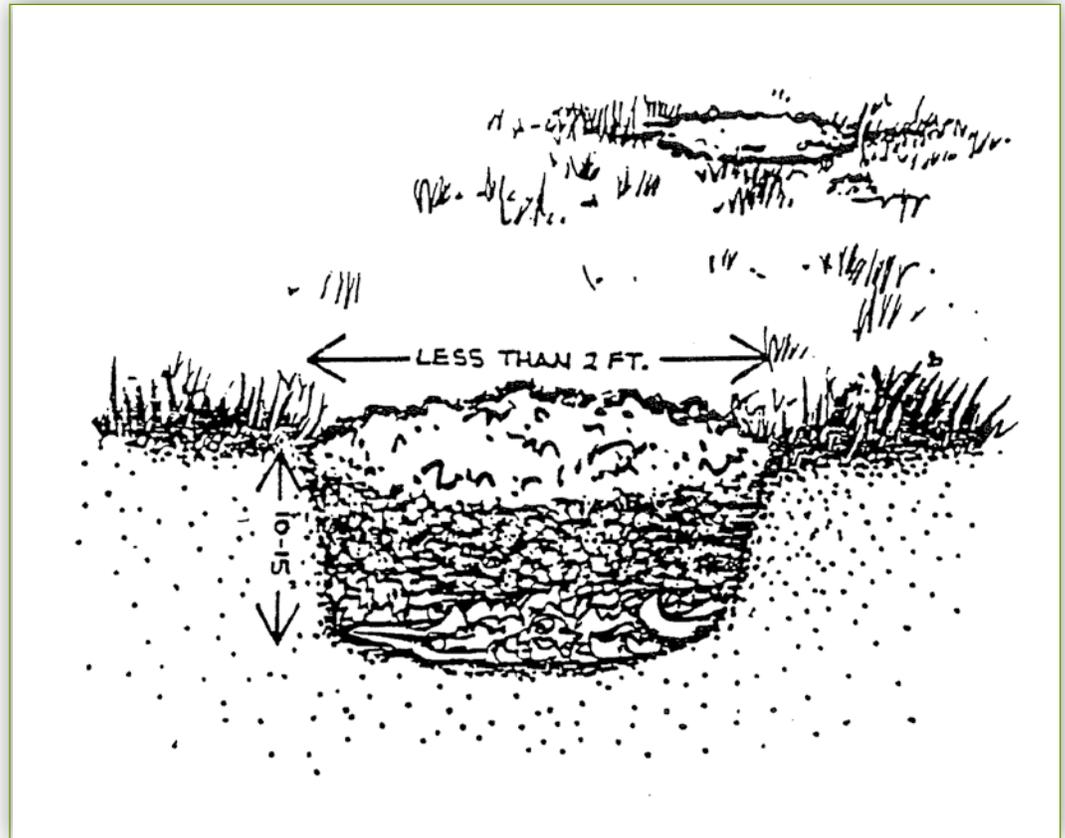
It is best to have two piles. After the first pile is large enough, stop adding organic material and let it work. In the meantime, add your wastes to the second pile.

Make sure the pile is moist, especially if it is not covered with soil.

You can turn the pile to speed up composting. Compost should be ready in three to four months if you turn the pile, or in about one year if you don't turn the pile.

Compost Pockets

This is an easy composting shortcut. You bury your fruit and vegetable wastes in small pockets in your garden, and let the microorganisms and soil animals do the work. Store your kitchen scraps in a plastic container until you are ready to compost them.



What You Need

Materials

- food wastes, collected in a plastic container or bucket

Tools

- shovel
- work gloves

What to Do

1. Dig holes 10 to 15 inches deep and less than 2 feet across.
2. Place food wastes in the holes and cover with soil. Make sure the soil cover is at least 8 inches deep so the buried materials do not attract animals.

Garbage Can Composter

A garbage can composter is inexpensive and easy to build. It can be used for food or garden wastes. You do, however, need to turn the wastes.

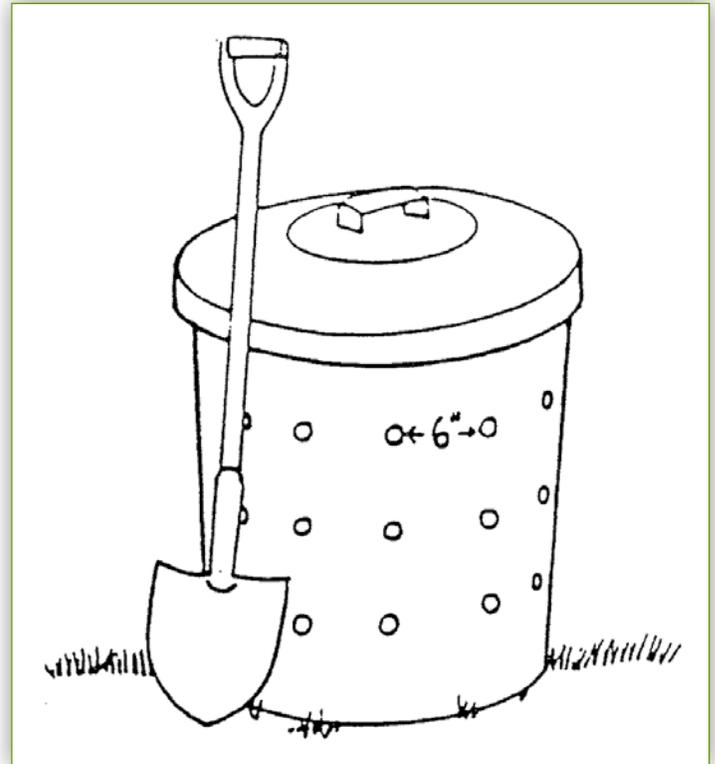
What You Need

Materials

- garbage can with cover
- coarse sawdust, straw, or wood chips

Tools

- drill
- pitch fork, shovel, or compost turner
- work gloves



Building a Garbage Can Composter

1. Drill three rows of holes 4 to 6 inches apart all around the sides of the garbage can. Then drill several holes in the base of the can. The holes allow air movement and the drainage of excess moisture.
2. Place 2 to 3 inches of dry sawdust, straw, or wood chips in the bottom of the can to absorb excess moisture and let the compost drain.

Adding Wastes

Add fruit, vegetable, and garden wastes. Make sure not to add too much of anyone waste at a time.

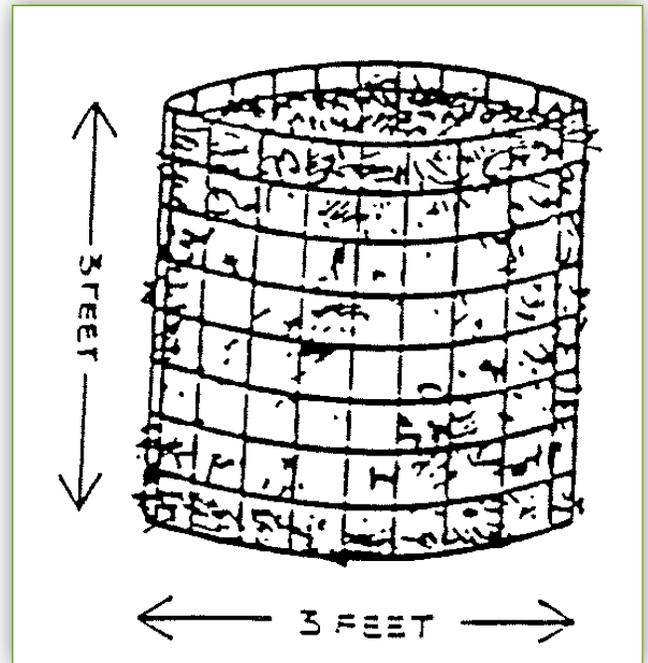
Maintaining Your Compost Pile

Regularly mix or turn the compost with a pitch fork, shovel, or compost turner and keep it covered. This adds air and mixes up the different wastes, preventing the compost from getting smelly. A smelly compost pile may attract animals and cause neighbors to complain.

Wire Mesh Bin

A wire mesh bin is inexpensive and easy to build out of either galvanized chicken wire or hardware cloth.

(Nongalvanized chicken wire can also be used but will not last very long.) Posts provide more stability for a chicken wire bin, but make the bin difficult to move. A wire mesh bin made without posts is easy to lift, allowing you to get at the compost that is already “done” at the bottom at the pile while the top of the pile is still cooking.



What You Need

Materials

- 12.5 feet of 36 inch wide 1 inch galvanized chicken wire or 1/2 inch hardware cloth
- heavy wire for ties
- 3 or 4 4-foot wooden or metal posts (for chicken wire bins)

Tools

- heavy duty wire or tin snips
- pliers
- hammer (for chicken wire bin)
- metal file (for hardware cloth bin)
- work gloves

Wire Mesh Bin continued

Building a Wire Mesh Bin

If using chicken wire:

1. Fold back 3 to 4 inches of wire at each end of the cut piece to provide a strong, clean edge that won't poke or snag and which will be easy to latch.
2. Stand the wire in a circle and set it in place for the compost pile.
3. Cut the heavy wire into lengths for ties. Attach the ends of the chicken wire together with the wire ties, using pliers.
4. Space wood or metal posts around the inside of the chicken wire circle. Holding the posts tightly against the wire, pound them firmly into the ground to provide support.

If using hardware cloth:

1. Trim the ends at the hardware cloth so the wires are flush with a cross wire to get rid of edges that could poke or scratch hands. Lightly file each wire along the cut edge to ensure safe handling when opening and closing the bin.
2. Bend the hardware cloth into a circle, and stand it in place for the compost pile.
3. Cut the heavy wire into lengths for ties. Attach the ends of the hardware cloth together with the wire ties using pliers.

Adding Wastes

Add wastes as they become available. Non-wood materials such as grass clippings and garden weeds work best. You can speed up the process by chopping or shredding the wastes

Maintaining Your Compost Pile

As you keep adding wastes to the wire mesh bin, the material at the bottom will become compost sooner than the material at the top. If you want to use the compost at the bottom of the pile, you can remove the wire holding unit and lace it next to the pile. Then, use a pitchfork to move the compost back into the moved holding unit, adding the material from the top of the pile first. Continue until you have replaced all the compost. Now the compost at the top of the bin is ready to use.

You also can scoop finished compost from the bottom of the pile by lifting one side at the unit.

Although you do not need to turn this pile, make sure it is moist during dry spells. Compost should be finished in about one year.

