

Your
guide to

composting



zero
waste
taranaki

Why should we compost?

About 35% of the 'rubbish' New Plymouth District households put in their landfill bins is compostable. Ten per cent is from the garden and a whopping 25% is from the kitchen!

And what a waste it is! When our food scraps and garden waste are mixed with other rubbish in the landfill, we lose all those valuable nutrients forever.



This guide will give you all the information you need to get kitchen and garden waste out of your landfill bin and back into our soil through composting.

A decorative orange dashed line starts in the top right corner and curves downwards and to the left, ending near the top of the first text block.

Composting is the process of turning organic waste into nutrient-rich soil that can be used in your garden.

It's an environmentally friendly and cost-friendly way to reduce your carbon footprint and improve the health of your plants.



Why
composting is
important.

Reduces landfill waste:

Composting keeps organic waste out of landfills, where it would otherwise take up space and emit harmful greenhouse gases.



Improves soil quality:

Compost is a natural fertiliser that provides nutrients to plants and helps to keep moisture in the soil.



Saves money:

Composting removes the need to buy expensive chemical fertilisers and lowers waste disposal costs.



Conserves resources:

Composting helps to save water by improving soil's ability to hold moisture.

What can you compost?

You can compost a wide variety of organic materials. Composting requires a ratio of about 30% green to 70% brown materials.



Greens: these are organic materials that are full of nitrogen. They usually rot quickly. Examples are fruit and vegetable scraps, coffee grinds, tea bags, crushed eggshells and fresh, green lawn clippings.

Browns: these are organic materials that are full of carbon. They can take a longer time to break down. Examples are dry leaves, wet torn up cardboard or newspaper, and hay or straw.

How to start composting

Starting a compost pile is easy!
Here are a few steps to get you started:

01



Location:

- Find a spot in your yard that is convenient and easily accessible, preferably in a sunny area, and close to a water source.

02



Build:

- Layer food scraps and other green organic materials with carbon items like dry leaves, hay, cardboard, shredded paper. For every handful of green material, add 2 handfuls of carbon material.

03



Water:

→ Keep your pile moist, but not too wet.

04



Turn:

→ To speed up the composting process, turn your pile every few weeks to keep it aerated.

05



Use:

→ When your compost is ready, use it in your garden to improve soil quality.

Composting Methods

There are several methods for composting. The best one for you will depend on your space and needs. Here are some common methods:



Compost Bin:

You can purchase a compost bin new or used. When the compost is ready to harvest, remove the bin and lift the top layers into a new spot and remove the finished compost from the bottom.

By wrapping a layer of chicken wire around the bottom, you can pest proof the bin.



D.I.Y.:

You can use a wide variety of material, including chicken wire, wood, pallets, bricks, concrete blocks, etc to make your own compost bin. It should sit directly on the soil and have access at the front for turning the contents.

Tumbling Composter:



A tumbling composter is a closed bin or drum that needs to be rotated often to mix the contents inside. They can make turning the compost easier and can help prevent pests. Because they sit off the ground they will not benefit from worms to help break down the materials.

What not to compost

While you can compost a wide variety of organic materials, there are some things that you should avoid putting in your compost. Here are some items you should not compost:

TIP:
Try adding these
to a bokashi bin
instead.

Meat, dairy, and fatty foods.

These can attract pests and slow down the composting process.



Pet Waste.

Pet waste can contain harmful bacteria and parasites that can contaminate your compost.

Diseased Plants.

Plants that are diseased can spread disease to your other plants through your compost.



Weeds

Weeds with seeds or those that spread easily from cuttings should be avoided to prevent them from spreading in your garden.

Troubleshooting

Even the most experienced composters can run into problems. Here are some common issues you may encounter and how to fix them:



Smelly compost:

If your compost smells bad, it may be too wet or not aerated enough. Try turning your compost more frequently and adding more dry materials.



Slow composting:

If your compost is taking too long to break down, it may not have enough nitrogen, may not be aerated enough or it may be too dry. Add more green materials, water, and turn the pile more often.



Pests:

If you have pests in your compost, it may be too wet or have too much food waste. Try adding more dry materials and covering your compost with a lid or screen.



Dry compost:

If your compost is too dry, it may not break down properly. Add more water or wet materials to your compost.

Online resources

Head to npdc.govt.nz/We-CompostHub
or scan here
to learn more.



Check out the NPDC **We Compost Hub** for more information on different composting systems for use at home, work and school. Support is available to help get you started or to troubleshoot along the way.

Our friends at Sustainable Taranaki regularly offer **Let's Compost** workshops to teach you everything about composting. Plus, you receive a discount off a bin system of your choice. You can host a workshop at your home garden, work, organisation, school or attend one that is already scheduled.

Let's Compost Workshops

Head to sustainableta-ranaki.org.nz
or scan here to
learn more.



Thanks!



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is brought
to you by:



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For more information head to
npdc.govt.nz/WeCompostHub