

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.

While natural decomposition of organic waste takes a long time, composting with a Tumbleweed Compost Bin or Tumbler and composting accessories, it can take just four weeks. Our compost products are designed to create the perfect environment and provides the air, water and food that micro-organisms need to rapidly multiply and quickly break down organic waste.

Your Tumbleweed Compost 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.

Why make compost?

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

Composting also helps your households environmental impact by reducing methane producing landfill.

Choose the best spot for your Compost Bin

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 Tumbleweed Compost Maker regularly, whether that is by tumbling if you have a tumbler or using a Compost Mate or Aerator. So place it where it is easy do so.

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.

5 easy steps for creating compost

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 or turn with a Tumbleweed Compost Mate every two days.
6. Add 1 teaspoon of Tumbleweed Worm Farm and Compost Conditioner every week.

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

How to use your compost

Use it as a 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.

Only add organics

Micro-organisms eat organic 'food'. That means you should only put materials into your compost 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

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.

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.