

Home Composting Workshop Bedford Farmers' Market June 14, 2010

Compost Bins



A compost bin can be made of pretty much anything that contains the materials. It should ideally have a minimum footprint of 4x4 feet.

This one is made with wooden stakes and hardware cloth. The downside is that without a top, critters can easily get in and make a mess. It would be excellent for just yard waste (leaves, sticks, grass, etc.). Yard waste will also decompose into compost.



You can construct a bin from wooden pallets (free from many large businesses). Wire the pallets together and, if you like, staple hardware cloth inside to prevent critters from entering. A simple removable top can be made with a wooden frame and hardware cloth.

A larger pile works better than a smaller one because it provides insulation, allowing the pile to heat up and speed decomposition.



There are many versions of the plastic outdoor compost bin. They are easy to find on-line and many municipalities order them in bulk to provide to residents more cheaply. These do a great job of keeping pests away. If you place them in a sunny spot, they will heat up nicely. This type with the round opening at the top is harder to turn using a pitchfork, but turning isn't really necessary unless you want to make compost quickly.

Compost Bins p.2



Vermiculture, or worm composting, allows you to compost food waste quickly, indoors, creating a high quality fertilizer in a self contained and nearly odorless manner.

A wonderful organization, Groundworks Somerville, sells a starter kit of worms and guide to worm composting for \$25 (compare to \$100-\$200 from various retail sources on-line!). Contact them at 617-628-9988.



Compost tumblers are often harder to make work properly. They are designed for spinning or tumbling using a handle or by hand, but compost works best if you turn a very large load all at once. These tumblers are often too small to build up the heat necessary for decomposition and hard to turn when full. Also, because the compost is not in contact with the soil, they lose heat and don't benefit from the insects and worms coming up from the ground.