

FACTSHEET #1

#RECYCLERIGHT



USING FOOD WASTE IN THE GARDEN

Did you know that around 45%* of what Australians put in the mixed waste bin is food organics and vegetation?

This creates methane in landfill, a noxious greenhouse gas and can release leachate, which can pollute the land, groundwater and waterways. Organics can be used in the garden instead, as a compost or to feed worms.

*Based on 25 audits conducted for Cairns Regional Council in 2011.

BENEFITS OF USING FOOD WASTE IN THE GARDEN

- Nutrient rich additives for your garden, eliminating the need for chemical fertilisers and manure, helping save money. This also supports plant health, helping them fight off disease.
- Helping soils to retain moisture, so you don't need to water them as frequently.

COMPOSTING

CHOOSE A METHOD

- A heaped compost is for large volumes but needs to be further from the house, covered and maintained regularly to avoid vermin. Commence with a cubic meter.

- A compost bin is for smaller volumes, and tumbler bins make turning your compost even easier. Using two bins, or the one divided into two parts helps divide the different stages of compost, so you can add new material to one, while letting the other mature.

- Place your compost away from the hot sun and protect from rain.

GATHER A MIX OF MATERIALS

- Brown, carbon rich materials such as dried leaves, shredded paper, egg cartons, tree bark and straw.

- Green, nitrogen-rich materials like fruit and vegetables, scraps, coffee grounds, tea leaves, garden cuttings and grass clippings.

MAKING YOUR COMPOST

- Keep layering brown and green materials
- Turn your compost regularly – every three weeks if in a heap, or weekly in a bin.
- Control excess moisture with more brown materials but keep damp.
- If turned regularly, your soil should be ready in approximately 3 months. If not, it may take 6 or more months. It will appear crumbly and smell earthy.

WORM FARMS

BENEFITS

- Suitable for small spaces and doesn't need turning or lots of brown material like compost.
- Liquid fertiliser (worm tea) and castings for the soil.

CHOOSE A METHOD

- In-ground: using a pipe or bottomless bucket for scraps, placed 2/3rds into a garden bed - worms will come up to feed.

- Above ground: create a worm farm with a tap and many layers, or layer several containers with holes in them and a solid bottom base.

- Worms can be purchased from a garden or hardware store. They're sensitive to extremes – keep out of the rain and direct sun.

FEED YOUR WORMS

- Worms thrive on scraps – everything from fruit and vegetable peelings to coffee grounds, dust or small paper materials.
- Avoid meat, dairy products, manures and acidic foods like orange peels, tomatoes and onions.
- Cover the worm bedding with hessian or newspaper.



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SHIRE COUNCIL

Before disposing of anything, have you considered ways to reuse, repair or donate unwanted items?
Visit msc.qld.gov.au/council/water-and-waste/recycling for further information.