

Making Compost

Compost is important for growing healthy crops on an allotment because it adds nutrients to the soil that are essential in supporting a range of plant functions. Many allotment gardeners choose to make their own compost, using up surplus waste. So, what will you need to make your own compost on your allotment?

Green organic matter

should make up around half of your compost heap as this will **decompose** quickly and help to nourish the microbes turning your waste into compost.

Examples of this include:

- fruit and vegetables
- uncooked kitchen waste
- grass cuttings
- green leaves

Try researching other green organic matter that you could compost.

Compost bins come in varying shapes and sizes and can be made of either plastic or wood. Essentially, you just need a container that has a lid (this is important to prevent water creating a soggy mess) and a closing outlet at the bottom.

Brown organic matter can vary from twigs and wood chippings, brown leaves and stems to shredded paper, card and straw.

Turn your compost heap regularly to ensure the different matter is well mixed and to add air to your mixture. This is essential in making better compost.

What other brown organic matter can be composted?

Think carefully about the position of your compost bin on your allotment – too warm or cold a position prevents the **bacteria** turning your waste into compost while too little or too much humidity stops the **micro-organisms** from decomposing the waste.

It is best if the base of your compost bin is sitting on soil rather than a hard base as this will allow it to drain easily and will get the **decaying** process started much quicker.



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Glossary

Bacteria

A form of micro-organism.

Micro-organisms

A microscopic living thing.

Brown organic matter

Matter from the remains of plants or animals high in carbon.

Nutrients

The substances required by plants and other living things to function, e.g. survive and grow.

Compost

The substance produced through composting (the recycling of organic matter through decomposition).

Compost bin

A container, often made of wood or plastic, where organic waste is recycled to make compost.

Decaying

The process whereby organic matter is broken down.

Decompose

To break down organic matter.

Green organic matter

Matter from the remains of plants or animals high in nitrogen.

