

How Do You Control the Odor? Designing a Compost Bin

There are three main ways to compost. Study each method and choose the best for your bin design. Visit the following Web sites to get some ideas for bin designs (you might not even want to have a bin):

www.cityfarmer.org/recipe.html#recipe*

www.cityfarmer.org/wormcomp61.html*

www.recyclenow.org/r_composting_bins.html*

Consider the following questions when monitoring your compost pile or bin:

1. How do I control the odor?
2. How do I compost in an apartment?
3. What's the best design for a small backyard bin?
4. How do I dispose of volatile organic compounds?
5. What is the correct chemistry for a compost pile?
6. How can composting control plant diseases?

Use the following tips to master the art and science of odor management:

- Get your wet garbage, particularly food and grass, into the composting mix before they begin to rot.
- Make sure that the moisture content of the mix is optimal (55% to 65% moisture range), so that you don't form anaerobic pockets, which can be a source of nitrogen and sulfur odors.
- Keep the pile well aerated. Without adequate oxygen, aerobic composting processes will stop, replaced by odor-generating anaerobic processes. You will need to do more than mix the pile. Make sure to use a generous proportion of coarse-textured amendments, so the pile is porous.
- Use a *compost pile blanket* to provide some biofiltration.
- Think about where you locate your pile and the time you work on it. For example, don't locate your pile right next to a window and in the direction of prevailing winds.