

What should I put in the compost bin?

Anything organic - that is anything that was once living, whether animal or vegetable can be composted but some materials are more appropriate than others for home composting. Organic material falls into two categories: 'Green' and 'Brown'. 'Green' or 'Nitrogen Rich' organic material is wet and often green like grass clippings or fruit and vegetables. 'Brown' or 'Carbon Rich' organic material is dry, woody material that is usually brown, such as fallen leaves, and tree-cuttings. The following list of materials can be composted at home. It has been separated into 'Green' and 'Brown' for simple identification.

GREEN

Coffee grounds
Tea leaves and tea bags
Fruit and vegetable waste (cooked or uncooked) - roots, cores, etc.
Bread, pasta and rice
Cut and dead flowers
Grass cuttings and green leaves
Weeds (Avoid weed seeds)
Old plants (Not diseased)
Seaweed or garden-pond cleanings

BROWN

Egg shells
Kitchen paper
Newspaper
Papers and light cardboard ,e.g. cereal or shoe boxes (crumpled)*
Wood/peat/peat ashes (no coal ashes)
Tree prunings and woody material (chopped)
Hay and straw
Sawdust or wood shavings



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Waste Watchers Guide to Slimming your Bin

*This brochure is not about recycling
- It is about reducing the amount of
waste we produce each day.*





In Limerick, Clare and Kerry we produce 384kg of waste per person each year. This figure is down by almost 10% from the 2005 figure. The trend is finally heading in the right direction, but we need to do more. Yes, we still want you to Recycle as much as possible. Recycle all your papers, magazines, cardboard, plastics, tetra paks, food and drink cans. But now try to reduce what you put in the bin for landfilling.

We want to reduce the kg's of waste we generate every day. At the end of 2006 householders in the Limerick, Clare and Kerry Region recycled 25% of all the waste we produce. We still landfill 75% of all the waste we produce, we need to Reduce Reduce Reduce.

So, if you want to slim your bin. The following are helpful hints which will help us reduce waste.

Think before you shop!

In Ireland we throw away 20% of all the food we buy, and most of this could have been eaten. Some of the waste is made up of things like peelings, cores and bones, but the majority is, or once was, perfectly good food. Research suggests that about 40% (by weight) of all the food thrown away that could have been eaten is fresh fruit and vegetables. Other food types that we regularly throw out include fish, bread, dairy produce, rice and pasta.

The main reason we throw away food is that we often prepare too much when cooking. This often happens with rice, pasta and potatoes. We also throw away food which we have not used in time - its past its 'best before' date or 'use by date.' This generally occurs with fish, poultry, meat, bread and dairy products.

When shopping think about the items you are buying - make small changes in your shopping habits you can greatly reduce the amount of waste you produce at home.

Buy only what you need

Reduce unnecessary waste by avoiding buying things you don't really need. Items that rarely get used can be rented, borrowed or shared with others. *Household surveys show that we throw away 30% of all the food we buy.*

If we took more care storing or freezing food, or even learning how to use leftovers we would save ourselves €2,000 on the food bill annually. Visit www.lovefoodhatewaste.com for further information.

Avoid disposable items

Buy recyclable batteries and reusable razors. Items such as these create very little waste, as they don't have to be thrown away after each use.

Buy products with less packaging

Where possible buy fruit and veg loose. For those items you use regularly, buy them in bulk instead of in smaller amounts. This will save you money as well as reduce your waste.

Reuse household items

Many items found at home can be used for different purposes. So before you throw those items away, think about how they can be reused. Below are some suggestions of how to reuse those everyday bits and pieces.

Sell or give away unwanted items

Reduce waste by donating unwanted items to family, friends or neighbours. You could even sell your possessions in a car boot sale and earn some extra cash or why not advertise items on the reuse web site; www.jumbletown.ie, www.freecycle.org

Reduce paper waste by canceling unwanted mail

Unsubscribe to many national mailing lists by contacting the Irish Direct Marketing Service. For cancelling unwanted mail you could use this link where you can download the necessary form:

http://www.raceagainwaste.ie/take_action/block_mail/

Buy all purpose household cleaner

Instead of buying many different ones for each cleaning role.

Use reusable shopping bags

Why buy a plastic bag each time you go to the shop when you can use a reusable bag.

Envelopes

By sticking labels over the address you can reuse envelopes. Alternatively, old envelopes can be used as scrap paper to make notes on.

Jars and pots

By cleaning glass jars and small pots, you can use them as small containers to store odds and ends. Alternatively they can be used for planting seeds, etc.

Newspaper, cardboard and bubble wrap

Makes good packaging material when moving house or to store items.

Unwanted clothes

Can be made into other textile items such as cushion covers or why not donate to your local charity shop.

Packaging

Why not check with your local schools and nurseries to see if they can be used in art and craft projects.

Scrap paper

Can be used to make notes and sketch paper. When you no longer need it don't forget to recycle it but be sure to use both sides first!

Hazardous waste

Never put household hazardous waste in your bin. Items such as oil based paints, weed killers, detergents, batteries etc. Many recycling centres in the region accept these materials and dispose of them safely.

Medicines

Keep medicines out of your bin. Medicines that are no longer required or past their best by date can be returned to your local pharmacy free of charge.

Home Composting

There are various forms of home composting - you can have a compost heap at the end of your garden or you can make or buy your own compost container. It should be possible to keep all garden waste out of your bin, find a small space in the corner of your garden and compost grass cuttings and hedge clippings

Home composting your food waste can reduce your waste to landfill site by up to 20%. It reduces the need to collect this type of waste which is problematic to dispose of. It is useful to have a small container in your kitchen that collects your organic waste for composting. This will reduce the number of trips to your compost container.

