



## HOT COMPOSTING



We love compost so much that we have three different systems! A 3-bay hot compost, 2 cold compost bins and a hybrid system in a tumbler.

We have a 3-bay hot composting system. Each bay is a 1-metre wooden cube with removable front panels and a central wire chimney to aid aeration of the pile.

Hot composting is achieved when the balance of greens, browns, air and water creates ideal conditions for aerobic organisms to thrive. The optimal peak temperature for aerobic composting is 60 °C. This high temperature also kills any lingering bacteria or weed seeds.

Imagine you are making a lasagna.

Layer your green and brown components in a ratio of about 2-3 parts brown to 1 part green. Water between layers. Moisture is essential for composting – your pile should always feel like a wrung-out sponge. Chopping / shredding all materials into small pieces helps the speed of the process.

We have a chipper, but you can use a lawn mower or simply chop materials up with a spade. Within a few days the temperature should reach 60 °C or more. When the temperature begins to fall, aerate the pile to re-invigorate the microbial activity and check it is still moist. Aeration speeds up the composting process and reduces odors. Turn your pile around once a week during summer and once every three to four weeks during winter. As it decomposes the pile will shrink to half its original height.

When the temperature drops to under 40 °C we turn the whole bay into next bay. And repeat the process in the now empty bay.

[outsidethebox.org.au](http://outsidethebox.org.au)



*My whole life had been spent waiting for an epiphany, a manifestation of God's presence, the kind of transcendent, magical experience that lets you see your place in the big picture. And that is what I had with my first compost heap.*

— BETTE MIDLER



## COLD COMPOST

Our black bins are our daily food waste compost system. We build up layers gradually with 1 part green and about 2-3 parts brown (usually pea straw). We aerate the bin every so often with a compost aerator tool and check that it stays a bit moist.

## HYBRID HOT/COLD

We fill the tumbler up in one go to about 75% of its volume with layers of brown and green in about a 50/50 ratio and water it in. Every couple of days we rotate the tumbler and check that it is still moist.

## BROWN (Carbon)

Pea straw, shredded paper, cardboard, sawdust and dead leaves (not gum).

## GREEN (Nitrogen)

Lawn clippings, spent vegetable matter, food scraps, coffee grounds, crushed eggshells, old flowers and manure.

