

# Waste to wonderful

## Home Composting

Kitchen scraps and garden waste make up a large part of household waste. In landfill, organic waste releases methane, a major greenhouse gas. Composting is a great way to keep your kitchen and garden waste out of landfill, feed your garden and save money.



The compost process uses air, moisture and heat to convert organic material into carbon-rich soil. If you stick to a few simple rules you'll have excellent compost for your garden, or to give away if you don't need it – check out [sharewaste.org.nz](https://sharewaste.org.nz) for details.

You can buy a compost bin from local retailers (check out which ones offer our Council subsidy on both Councils' websites - search word: compost) or make your own out of any materials you have to hand, such as pallets or untreated wood.

Check out our video on how to get started home composting along with more information on what to do with food and garden waste. It's on both Councils' websites ([search word: compost](#)).

***Nā tō rourou, nā tōku rourou, ka ora ai te iwi.***

*With your food basket, and my food basket, the people will thrive.*



**RETHINK  
WASTE**

  
**Nelson City Council**  
Te Kaunihera o Whakatū

  
**tasman**  
district council  
Te Kaunihera o  
**te tai o Aorere**



# TOP TIPS

For composting:



## Top tip 1

Layer "greens" (nitrogen: food scraps, coffee grounds, garden waste, seaweed, manure, etc) and "browns" (carbon: drier woodier materials like straw, dried leaves, wood ash, egg cartons, shredded cardboard and paper, untreated saw dust, etc). Each layer should be five to 10cm deep. Cut things small to speed up the process.

## Top tip 2

Variety is great to make good compost so use any food scraps except for meat, dairy and oil.

## Top tip 3

Compost heaps need moisture – water each layer as you go and keep the bin or heap covered. Once your bin is full or your heap is about one metre high, leave it covered to mature but check occasionally that it's not too dry.

## Top tip 4

Speed up the process by keeping your bin or heap aerated, for example by turning it with a fork. The more you do this, the quicker it will compost. Compost is ready when you can't see what it was and it looks dark and crumbly.

## Top tip 5

To make sure you have enough browns (it's good to have more browns than greens where possible), hang on to your cardboard and paper, or dry materials like straw.

## Top tip 6

If you're worried about rodents, cut out a piece of chicken wire larger than the bin base, place under the bin and curl the sides 10cm up the side of the bin.

## Top tip 7

Keep tricky invasive weeds (and those that are seeding) out of your bin so that you don't end up spreading weeds with your compost. Also avoid cat and dog feces if you are using your compost to grow food. Large woody pieces like bamboo and cabbage tree leaves also don't compost well.

## Top tip 8

Stay safe when handling both domestic and commercial compost (it can contain legionella bacteria which can cause serious respiratory disease). Wear gloves and a properly fitted mask and only handle compost in well ventilated areas, preferably outdoors. Open bags of soil products slowly and dampen down before use. Always wash your hands when you've finished.

