

10 Household Items That Can Be Composted (and 5 That Can't)



Composting household items is the most efficient way to create nutrient gold for your garden. If you can use up what you have on hand, you can save money and reduce the amount of waste you

create.

So what can you toss into the [compost](#) bin? Here are ten household items you can compost.

Composting Household Items

There's one big rule when composting household items: Make sure you cut them into tiny pieces!

Chuckling big pieces of anything into your compost bin is an easy way to fail. Composting takes time. The bigger the items inside your bin, the longer it'll take for them to break down.

- **Leaf and grass clippings.** When your yard needs a good sprucing up, collect the dead plant matter and toss it into your compost bin.
- **Fruit and vegetable peels.** You can also throw in the cores of fruits like apples and peaches. Got rotting fruit at the back of your produce drawer? You can toss that into the compost, too.
- **Parchment paper.** This is also fine to put into the compost bin. Just make sure it doesn't have a waxy coating.
- **Houseplant detritus.** Frequent pruning helps keep [houseplants](#) looking neat and tidy. Don't throw away all those dead leaves, though. Pop them into your compost bin. As long as the plant matter isn't diseased, you can compost dead plant matter right at home. If you're dealing with diseased plants, throw those leaves and roots into the commercial composting bin—if your city provides one.

Composting Other Household Items

- **Teabags.** Not all tea bags are compostable. Check the label to make sure the bag will degrade in your compost bin. If in doubt, tear them open and compost the

innards.

- **Coffee grounds.** Regardless of the kind of coffee you love to drink, you're bound to create a lot of coffee ground waste. It can be annoying to head to the compost bin every time you brew coffee, though. Instead, grab a glass container and fill it with used grounds. When it's full, toss them into the compost.
- **Paper plates.** As long as they don't have a waxy coating, paper plates can go into the compost.
- **Bamboo skewers and chopsticks.** Again, as long as they aren't coated in some type of film, these are also fair game for the compost. I also like using these as supports for my [tomato](#), pepper, and eggplant seedlings.
- **Cardboard.** Don't expect to chuck in giant pieces of cardboard and successfully compost it. Cut it into small pieces before tossing it into your bin.
- **Paper bags.** The same goes for paper bags. Make sure you're adding small pieces to your bin.

Household Items You Can't Compost

Composting household items is a great way to reduce your waste production. However, you can't compost everything. Here are some things you should avoid tossing into your compost bin:

- **Eggshells.** People will recommend composting eggshells until they're blue in the face, but the truth is that they decompose extremely slowly.
- **Meat and bones.** Save these for the commercial compost bin. Your at-home bin doesn't produce enough heat to kill off potentially dangerous pathogens.
- **Anything with a waxy or glossy coating.** A plastic coating means the item won't compost, and it may even contain harmful toxins.
- **Big branches and large plants.** It sounds like a good idea, but...it isn't. Anything big is going to take way too much time to decompose.

- **Cooked food.** You run the risk of inviting pests into or around your compost bin by adding cooked food to the mix.

Read More

[Yes, you can garden for free](#)

[Ten ways to get free plants for your garden](#)

[How to get free plants](#)

Are Compost Bins Worth the Money?



Compost is an excellent amendment for your garden, and making

your own is reasonably straightforward and cheap. Is it worth investing in a bin, though? Are compost bins worth the money?

Let's take a look at the cost of a traditional compost bin and the benefits of buying a pre-built container.

Cost of a compost bin

To find out whether compost bins are worth the money, we must understand the cost of the average model.

Storebought bins range in price but on average cost about \$100. The larger and more complex the bin, the higher the price tag. Tumbler-style bins tend to cost a bit more than freestanding plastic options.

Indoor compost systems designed to break down food mechanically are cost-prohibitive, and the technology still has a long way to go.

There are, however, plenty of simple, inexpensive bin designs available on the market.

Benefits of a store-bought compost bin

Why bother purchasing a bin? Here are a few pros:

- **Ready to go.** Store-bought compost bins are ready to use right out of the box, often with little assembly required. They're great for gardeners with minimal DIY experience.
- **Great for beginners.** If you're totally new to composting, buying a bin is an excellent way to get started. Many bins also come with handy instructions.
- **Pays for itself.** If you use it correctly, your bin will pay for itself over time. You won't need to buy bags of compost when the time comes to amend your soil.

Buying a compost bin isn't worth it, however, if you expect to

move in the near future since most bins are not easily portable.

DIY compost bin ideas

Frugal gardeners who prefer not to spend too much cash at once can create DIY compost bins from found, recycled, or inexpensive materials. You don't need much to make your very own compost container. Here are a few ideas for building your own bin from scratch:

[Worm compost bin](#)

I wrote a post a little while ago about how to create an easy DIY worm compost bin.

[Cinderblock compost bin](#)

Have leftover cinder blocks from long past outdoor projects? Use them to build a sturdy compost bin.

[Wire compost bin](#)

This innovative, easy to build compost bin idea requires minimal tools and materials and keeps all your green and brown waste in one tidy spot.

[Milkcrate compost bin](#)

Check out this creative idea for repurposing milk crates into a super simple and effective compost bin.

[Leftover pallet compost bin](#)

Don't let leftover pallets go to waste. Use them to create a DIY compost bin. Instead of tossing those old pallets to the side of the road, recycle them into a garden project.

DIY Tumbler Compost Bin