

HOTBIN - 80 Things You Can and Can't Compost

Key: HOTBIN = recommended for hot composting bin. Rate - how fast does it decompose (fast, medium, slow, very slow)

Any item that was a plant or animal will compost. How easy and practical each item is to compost depends on many factors - eg what the waste is made from (sugars are easier to decompose than carbohydrates > proteins > fats/waxes > cellulose > lignin), size of pieces (small decompose faster than large). Waste is broken down faster at high temperature (X32 faster at 60C vs. 10C). In an appropriate hot composting bin, you can compost ALL food waste without attracting rats and flies. Individually each item of food waste does not make much compost, but collected weekly, a typical 4 person household will generate around 250 kgs of food waste per year. That is a couple of sacks of quality compost.

Item	HOTBIN	Rate	Comments
1 All food	Yes		
2 All vegetable & peelings	Yes	Fast	Always cut up large vegetables
3 Apples, including pips	Yes	Fast	
4 Avocado stones (pits)	Yes	Medium	
5 Banana skins	Yes	Fast	
6 Bokashi Digestate	Yes	Slow	
7 Bones	Yes	Slow	OK to hot compost, chop large bones in smaller parts
8 Bread	Yes	Fast	
9 Broccoli, stalks, greens	Yes	Medium	Chop large pieces to less than 4cm
10 Cakes, pastry	Yes	Fast	
11 Cereals, bran, oats	Yes	Fast	
12 Coffee grinds	Yes	Slow	
13 Compostable bags	Yes	Medium	Bag needs to be cut to pieces before putting in HOTBIN
14 Cooked food	Yes	Fast	HOTBIN temprature must be above 40C before you put in cooked food
15 Defrosted (unfrozen) food	Yes	Fast	Must leave to defrost and chop up
16 Dairy products hard (cheese, butter)	Yes	Fast	

Food	17	Dairy products soft (yoghurt, milk)	No		Water content too high for effective hot composting
	18	Egg shells	Yes	Slow	
	19	Flour	Yes	Fast	Sprinkle in, avoid large piles
	20	Fruits	Yes	Fast	All fruits will compost. Stones/nuts take longer
	21	Frozen foods	No		Frozen food takes too much heat from the heap
	22	Citrus fruits (lemons, limes, oranges..)	Yes	Medium	All citrus fruits will compost
	23	Juice pulps (orange, grapefruit)	Yes	Medium	pulp from juicing - add wood chips and balance excess water with shredded
	24	Meat & Poultry (raw or cooked)	Yes	Fast	
	25	Nuts	Yes	Slow	Break nut shells with hammer to speed up composting
	26	Oils, palm oil, olive oil	Yes	Medium	Small quantities mixed in, but not 'half bottle loads
	27	Pasta	Yes	Fast	
	28	Pineapple	Yes	Slow	The yellow fruit will compost fast. Ensure waxy leaves and skin chopped up
	29	Rice, cooked	Yes	Fast	
	30	Seafood (fish, skin, bone) and shell fish	Yes	Slow	Some shell fish can be very slow to compost
	31	Tea bags	Yes	Medium	Some take longer than others - depends on bag!
	32	Vegetables (potatoes, onions, carrots...)	Yes	Fast	
Wood based	<p>Most things from a domestic garden can be composted with a little care and time. It takes longer to breakdown 'woody' materials. Shredding thick stems helps bacteria get to the soft digestible cellulose behind the protective bark. How long wood based wastes take to decompose depends on the size of the pieces and whether the wood pulp has been de-lignified in the pulping process. White paper and corrugated cardboard can be hot composted quickly while newspaper can take months. Wood chips 9-36 months tree trunks 10-20 years.</p>				
	33	Wood based waste	Yes	V Slow	
	34	Wood treated with preservatives	Yes	V Slow	modern preservatives are biodegradable and are compostable
	35	Cereal box, paper plates	Yes	Slow	shred
	36	Toilet rolls, kitchen rolls	Yes	Slow	shred
	37	Corrugated cardboard boxes	Yes	Medium	tear into small strips
	38	Egg cartons (Paper!)	Yes	Medium	tear into small strips

From the Garden	39	Glossy magazine paper	NR	Medium	Not recommended
	40	Newspaper	Yes	Slow	shred
	41	Paper, printed & colored printed	NR	Medium	Not recommended
	42	Pizza box	Yes	Medium	Tear into small strips
	43	Sawdust	Yes	Medium	Too much will block airflow
	44	Wood shavings	Yes	Slow	Too much will block airflow
	45	Autumn leaves	Yes	Slow	Can be hard to break down - add in small lots each week
	46	BBQ skewers bamboo	Yes	V Slow	Just wood!
	47	BBQ ash / briquettes / coal	No		Contains potash - good for some soils. Too much blocks air flow
	48	Bird feathers	Yes	Slow	
	49	Branches	Yes	V Slow	Larger = slower. You really need to shred/chip
	50	Coconut fibre	Yes	V Slow	
	51	Diseased plants	Yes	Medium	High temperature kills diseased virus/bacteria
	52	Flowers, stems, dead heads, roots	Yes	Medium	
	53	Grass	Yes	Medium	
	54	Grass sods	No		Will block airflow in a hot heap. Only the grass composts
	55	Green leaves	Yes	Medium	Shred waxy leaves
	56	Ground cover, nettles, etc	Yes	Medium	
	57	Hay	Yes	Medium	Stems of long meadow grasses (tends to be less stiff than straw)
	58	Herbicides, pesticides	NR	Medium	Not recommended
	59	Leylandii & conifer	Yes	Slow	Ensure well shredded, add in small amounts not one large layer
60	Lime (calcium carbonate)	No		Not biodegradable, Affects Ph - best left out	
61	Moss	Yes	Slow	Takes ages - best fed in as small amount each week	

	62	Old compost	Yes	Slow	
	63	Peat	Yes	Medium	
	64	Pine cones & Pine needles	Yes	Slow	
	65	Prunings & Twigs	Yes	Slow	Better shredded
	66	Slugs and snails	Yes	Medium	snail shell - very slow
	67	Weeds - dandelion, bindweed, buttercup	Yes	Medium	
	68	Waxy leaves (ivy, laurel, holly)	Yes	Slow	Chop up, do not add thick layers, mix in
	Miscellaneous	69	Cat litter - paper	Yes	Medium
70		Celloptape (cellulose acetate)	Yes	Slow	A "plastic" that decomposes!!
71		Chewing gum	NR	Slow	Not recommended
72		Cigarette butts	NR	Slow	Not recommended
73		Dog hair, pet hair	Yes	Medium	
74		Hair from hair brush	Yes	Medium	
75		Left over dog & cat food	Yes	Fast	
76		Compostable cutlery	Yes	Medium	Ensure broken up to pieces
77	Soap pieces	Yes	Medium		
78	Wine corks (natural)	No			
Manure	<p><i>All manures can be composted. Some sites are adamant you should only add herbivore (plant grazing) animal manure to your compost because meat eating animal manures might contain pathogens. All manures and all waste can potentially be harmful to humans, other animals and plants. We advise no manure is added to soil 'fresh'. Composting bacteria, heat and time away from animal host gut all lead to destruction of faecal pathogens. Good hygiene is also key. Different manures have slightly different NKP values - but this is largely irrelevant - whether the manure is mixed with bedding (straw, card and wood) has more impact than which animal created the manure.</i></p>				
	79	Pet Bedding (rabbit, chicken)	Yes	Slow	
	80	Pet poo (dog, cat, rabbit, bird)	Yes	Medium	