



COMPOSTING AT HOME IN DARWIN

City of Darwin is offering a compost bin rebate of up to \$100 for residents to purchase a compost bin from a local supplier. Scan the QR code or visit: darwin.nt.gov.au/compost-bin-rebate to learn more.



SCAN ME

WHY COMPOST IN THE TOP END?

Food makes up a huge part of what we throw away. Did you know that over a third of all residential waste going to landfill is food?

In fact, Australian households throw out up to 20% of the food they buy. When food waste breaks down in landfill, it also creates more harmful greenhouse gas emissions. Composting is an easy way to help!

Composting turns your food scraps into a nutrient-rich soil booster, helping your garden grow—from flowering natives to your own food! Because Darwin is so warm, our year-round microbial activity also means compost works at “turbo speed”—often breaking down in weeks rather than months.

Use this handy guide to get started on your home composting journey!

BEFORE YOU COMPOST

- Try to limit food waste at home first – it will save you money too!
- Plan ahead and buy only what you need
- Store food wisely to keep it fresh - think cool, dry and sealed!
- Freeze leftovers for another day, or fruit that is about to turn
- Backyard chickens - if you have the space, chickens will eat your scraps and lay eggs

WHICH COMPOST BIN IS BEST FOR YOU?

	TRADITIONAL BIN	TUMBLER BIN	BOKASHI BIN
BEST FOR	Big gardens and families	Faster results and pest control	Apartments and small spaces
WHERE IT GOES	On soil in the shade	Outside in the shade (No need for soil)	Indoors (e.g. under the sink or outside under cover)
WASTE TYPE	No meat, dairy, or bones	No meat, dairy, or bones	All food waste is okay

Don't want a bin? Some residents prefer the ‘dig and bury’ method. Simply bury your scraps about 30cm deep directly into garden beds – making sure to rotate the spot each time. It's a great way to feed the soil exactly where you need it most!



**A COOL, CLEAN
AND GREEN CITY**

**CITY OF
DARWIN**

THE GOLDEN RULE: BROWNS VS GREENS (2:1)

For healthy compost, you need balance - Aim for two parts 'brown' for every one part 'green'.

GREENS = NITROGEN

Scraps: Fruit and veggie peels (including citrus and onion in small amounts), coffee grounds, tea leaves, fresh grass clippings

Role: Provide the "fuel" for heat and microbes

BROWNS = CARBON

Dry Stuff: Dry garden waste, shredded paper and cardboard, paper towel (food-soiled only) and home compostable packaging (look for the logo!)

Role: Provide the "filter" for airflow and structure

TROPICAL TROUBLESHOOTING: PESTS & HEAT

"There are cockroaches in my bin" - Don't worry they're actually helpful decomposers. They usually move in if the bin is too dry. To move them on, add a watering can of water and stir the pile well with a garden fork.

"What about rats or rodents?" - To keep rats out of traditional bins, secure a piece of fine wire mesh (holes smaller than 1cm) under the base. Always bury new food scraps under 10cm of "browns" or soil to hide the smell. A sealed tumbler bin is also a great pest-resistant choice.

"My compost smells like rotten eggs" - This means it's too wet or needs more air, which is common in the wet season. Stir in some more "browns" (shredded paper or dry leaves) to soak up the moisture and let it breathe.

"There are maggots in my bin" - In the tropics, these are usually Soldier Fly larvae. They are harmless and excellent at breaking down food quickly. If you want fewer of them, bury your food scraps deeper under a thick layer of "browns."

"It's getting too hot and drying out" - Darwin's sun can "cook" your good microbes. Always place your bin in a flat, semi-shaded spot. If it feels dry, add water and a few fresh "green" scraps to get things moving again.

GET STARTED WITH A COMPOST BIN REBATE

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THE COMPOSTING PROCESS

1. **CHOP:** If you can, cut scraps into smaller pieces to help them break down faster.
2. **MIX:** Layer two parts brown with every one-part green.
3. **MOISTEN:** Keep it damp, like a wrung-out sponge.
4. **AERATE:** Microbes need air. Turn a traditional bin every 1–2 weeks or spin your tumbler every 3–5 days.
5. **HARVEST:** It's ready when it looks like dark, crumbly, earthy-smelling soil.

WHEN DO I STOP ADDING MATERIAL?

Eventually, you must let the batch "finish" so it can fully break down. Some people have two compost bins on the go for this reason.

Traditional Bins:

Depending on the design, you can often release finished compost from the bottom hatch while adding new scraps on top.

Tumblers: When 75% full, stop adding scraps and just spin until it's dark and crumbly.

Bokashi: Once full, seal it and let it sit for 2 weeks.

Or visit: darwin.nt.gov.au/compost-bin-rebate

