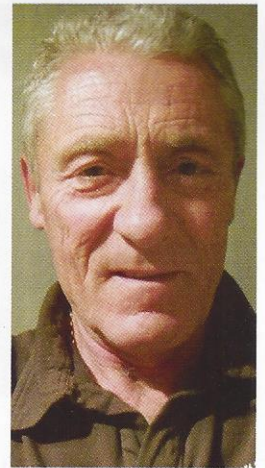


# Composting my Way

Mick Poultney, Midland Branch



*"The best container for this method is the blackwall compost bin..."*

My methods of composting give me ready-to-use compost in a month (two months in the winter). This has been achieved by trial and error over the last 10 years! The more you can chop and mix the ingredients, the quicker the breakdown of materials and less work for the worms. The ingredients I use are:

- spent mushroom compost (rubbed out by hand)
- spent hops and malt (local brewery)
- grass cuttings
- garden soil / mole hills (this is a must for the bacteria and fungi)
- spent coffee grounds
- spent tea leaves
- seaweed (washed down then chopped)
- saw dust / straw with pet droppings
- used bedding plants
- used grow bags
- chopped nettles (before they go to seed)
- manure: horse, cow, sheep
- green kitchen waste (chopped)
- green waste from garden (chopped) including rhubarb leaves
- shredded newspaper (not coloured or glossy)

- kitchen / loo rolls
- egg boxes (not coloured)
- cardboard (not coloured) ..... all these ripped up! I do this while watching the box!!
- egg shells crushed
- leaves (shredded)
- comfrey (chopped)
- basalt rock dust
- out-of-date beer / wine / coke , urine (men only !)

My chopping-up is done in a builders' bucket, using hedge shears. Once my garden and kitchen waste are chopped up, these are then mixed in a large compost bag, then two handfuls of everything are put into another bag. When one third full, this is mixed up and is then ready to go into the bin. The best container for this method is the blackwall compost bin, (quite a few councils do a deal @ 3 per household). In these I put a 3" layer of mixed ingredients, a layer of shredded newspaper, a fist full of activator then water ... then start again! There is no need to turn the mixture, the worms do that for you (nature!). Check your compost every 7 to 10 days to make sure it's moist; if it dries out or gets too wet the worms will clear off! Keep it warm and moist and they will stay there and do their job. If worms stick to the lid, add lime to sweeten! Do not use any part of onions / lemons / oranges as they are too acidic and worms hate that! There are quite a few activators already in there, but others I use are seaweed meal and perkla, (garrota is ok if it's all you can get hold of).

Once the bin is full I then go down to the fishing tackle shop and get £3 worth of brandling worms to get the heap working even quicker. I don't use the door on the bottom of the bin, I empty it from the top, using a bucket then upend it when I can't reach in!

At the bottom of my bins I put chicken wire to stop the moles nicking my worms! Plus, to start off, I put a layer of straw in the bottom of the bin. This also helps to stop the moles pulling the worms through the chicken wire.

**Mick Poultney**

