

Eco Tip Week 4 - Compost Corner

This week tip is provided by Paul Butler.

Research indicates that almost half of the food waste in the average rubbish bin could have been composted! You can do your bit to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfills or other more costly forms of treatment by composting your food and garden waste at home.

Compost improves your soil's condition, retains moisture, and your plants and flowers will love it! Ideally, site your compost bin in a reasonably sunny spot on bare soil. It would help if you sited your bin on soil because it makes it very easy for beneficial microbes and insects to access the rotting material. It also allows for better aeration and drainage, essential to successful composting. For fast composting, aim for a good mix of browns (carbon, slower to rot) and greens (nitrogen, faster to rot).

Keep the bin reasonably moist throughout and occasionally turn to allow air to feed the process. A list of suggestions is below. An ideal is to have more than one bin or heap to feed one and allow others to settle and break down. We are currently running five here at Holy Trinity!

It takes between nine and twelve months for your compost to become ready for use, so now all you need to do is wait and let nature do the work. Keep on adding greens and browns to top up your compost. Once your compost has turned into a crumbly, dark material, resembling thick, moist soil and gives off an earthy, fresh aroma, you know it's ready to use. London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames residents can obtain discounted compost bins via getting composting.com or at Townmead if preferred to an open heap.

Environmentally, compost comes into its own when used to replace man-made fertilisers and all that goes into producing them. Still, it is also important to remember that if the materials were to enter landfills, they would produce methane, which is a substantial contributor to global warming.

<u>Greens</u>	Browns	Keep out
Animal manure with straw	Autumn leaves	Bones
Annual weeds	Cardboard	Cans
Bracken	Christmas tree	Cat litter
Brussels sprout stalk	Corn starch liners	Cigarette ends
Carrot tops	Cotton towels	Cling film
Citrus peel	Cotton wool	Coal ash

Coffee grounds	Egg shells & boxes	Crisp packets
Comfrey leaves	Evergreen pruning's	Dairy products
Cut flowers	Hair	Disposable nappies
Grass Cuttings	Natural corks	Dog faeces
Hay	Nuts	Dog food
Hedge clippings	Paper bags	Drink cartons
House plants	Privet	Meat and fish scraps
Ivy leaves	Straw	Olive oil
Nettles	Sweetcorn cobs	Plastic bags and bottles
Old bedding plants	Thorny pruning's	Soiled tissues
Perennial weeds	Tomato plants	
Poisonous plants	Used kitchen paper	
Rhubarb leaves	Vacuum cleaner contents	
Seaweed	Wood ash	
Soft pruning's and plant debris	Wool	
Tea leaves and bags		
Urine		
Vegetable peelings and pulp		