

**Communities
Biodiversity
Project**

**COMPOST AND
WATER BUTTS**



COMPOST

Why should we compost?

- Feeding soil is foundation of organic gardening.
- Feeds soil organisms.
- It's free and saves money.
- Best type of recycling.
- Uses up waste products.

Why not use peat?

- It's important for biodiversity and for capturing carbon from atmosphere.

How to make compost?

- Natural process that transforms kitchen and garden waste.
- Layer up lots of materials over time.
- Turn it regularly to let air in.
- Have more than 1 compost bin.

How long will it take?

- 6 mths to 12 mths.

Factors that affect time

- How often it is turned.
- Time of year.
- Worm action.
- Mixture of material.
- Volume of material.
- Moisture content.

How and where to make it?

- Away from the house, but somewhere convenient in the garden.
- An unused corner is ideal.
- Allotment site.
- Pallets/ old wood/ netting chicken wire.

What to put in your compost heap?

Brown (carbon rich) dry or woody material

- Cardboard.
- Shredded paper.
- Egg shells.
- Newspaper.
- Sawdust.
- Wood shavings.
- Fallen leaves
- Straw

Green (nitrogen rich) wet or recently grown material

- Grass clippings.
- Apples cores.
- Banana skins.
- Coffee grounds.
- Teabags.
- Fresh hedge clippings.
- Vegetable peelings.
- Plants that have finished cropping.
- Flowers.
- Fresh seaweed.
- Weeds (that do not have seed heads)

If it is too wet, add more browns.

If it is too dry, add more greens.

NEVER MEAT OR COOKED FOOD

Turning helps the process!

- The more you turn your compost heap, the quicker it will compost.
- Turning incorporates oxygen which will help the bacteria, worms and other organisms break down the compost
- Frequent turning also deters any small rodents from getting too comfy and setting up home!
- If turning in autumn or winter, or making leaf mould please be careful of any hibernating hedgehogs

Interesting fact

“One Teaspoon of Soil Contains More Living Organisms Than There Are People in the World.”

How to start with composting?

- Keep a separate bin in the kitchen to collect apple cores, banana skins, tea bags, vegetable peelings, used tissues.
- Ask friends and neighbours if they will save their vegetable peelings for you.
- Add shredded paper or the insides of toilet rolls.
- Collect leaves in autumn and add some of these

How and where to make it?

- Away from the house, but somewhere convenient in the garden.
- An unused corner is ideal.
- Allotment site.
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➤ **Top Tip:** Empty your compost caddy bin regularly so that it doesn't become too heavy or a little smelly.

Leaf Mould

Not just as nutritious as compost but still brilliant to improve the texture of your soil.

- Another free resource, and it's so easy to make.....
- Plus, you're doing 2 jobs at once

Interesting fact

“Leaf mould is formed by decaying leaves (think forest floor) and is a superb soil conditioner.”

Making Leaf Mould

- Gather up the fallen leaves in autumn.

Either.....

- Put them in a big pile in a corner somewhere on grass and forget about them for a year; the worms will do the rest. You could cover with a piece of old carpet or plastic but it's not necessary.
- If you don't have a grass corner, fill old compost bags or bin bags with the leaves and punch some air holes in them. Leave the bags somewhere out of the way for a year.

Videos

Composting video available on this page: (1 min 14 secs)

<https://ccea.org.uk/growing/january.php>

Food for Thought composting video (8 mins 18 secs)

https://youtu.be/zT2W0IF_3U0

Notes:

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WATER BUTTS AND SAVING WATER

Plants need the following in order to grow.

Light

Air

Water

Nutrients

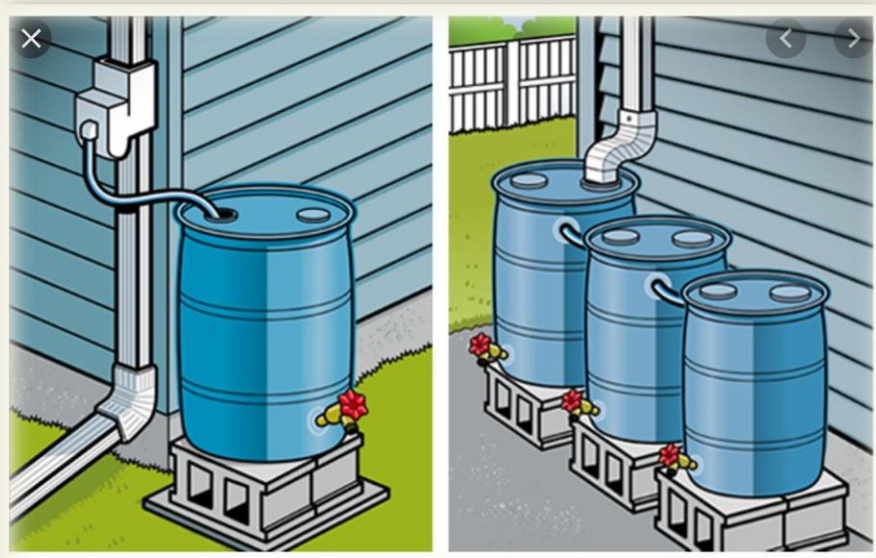
Plants actually prefer rain water to tap water.

Rain water contains less salts, minerals and chemicals sometimes found in tap water.

You can capture water in large basins, an old bath or even buckets and smaller containers such as empty milk containers.



- Water butts of different sizes can be purchased and connected to spouting.
- Raise water butts off the ground so that it is easy to fill a watering can or bucket.
- Water can be collected off any structure with a roof – houses, sheds, greenhouse.
- You just need a guttering and a downspout.



- You can connect 2 or more water butts using fairly inexpensive connectors.



- Fresh water is a precious resource.
- A sprinkle of rainwater is similar to a light dose of fertiliser.
- Rainwater is 100% soft on plants.
- Water butt harvesting saves money if you are on a water meter
- Rainwater is naturally balanced for healthier plants.
- A water butt reduces your home's carbon footprint.
- They cut pressure on other fresh resources.
- They support the recycling industry.
- They are quick and easy to install and last for many years.
- Councils now subsidise water butts by 60% or more.

Advice

With permanent planting such as you would have with fruit trees and fruit bushes and grassy wildflower areas, once established there should be a low water requirement unless there is a drought.

Growing food should help to reduce our environmental impact and harvesting your own water will bring you even closer to growing in harmony with nature.

In any growing area it makes sense to save rainwater to water your crops.

1. In the UK & Ireland, we take our rainy days for granted, often wishing them away. Yet compare our green and fertile hills with those arid areas of the world where rain isn't a given and we start to understand how this plentiful supply of fresh water is actually one of our most precious resources. Don't let it wash down the drain unused!
2. Rainwater contains nitrates and organic matter, so it feeds and nourishes the plants as you're watering them. Get ready for lush foliage!
3. If you feel like you've always struggled to keep house plants happy, try watering them with rainwater! Rainwater is soft: free from the salts, minerals and chemicals found in treated tap water, natural ground water and surface water. The residues from these can be harsh on plants and will build up in the soil over time if you're not careful.
4. Outdoor water use accounts for around 7% of our total household water use on average, but on a hot summer day this can rise to over 50%! Don't waste high quality metered drinking water on plants, use a watering can and saved rainwater to keep plants hydrated through the summer.
5. Rainwater is slightly acidic, which helps create the soil conditions that the majority of plants prefer.
6. Did you know that each household in the UK has half a tonne of water delivered to their door every day? The energy costs associated with treating and pumping this water are massive, so any water savings are automatically carbon savings too!
7. Collecting the rainwater which falls onto British households' roofs would save about 30,000 million litres of fresh water each summer – that's enough drinking water to fill an entire reservoir!
8. Most water butts are made from hardwearing recycled plastic, so your purchase helps to support Britain's green industry and keep a chunk of useful material out of landfill.
9. Most water butts come with attachments that fit to your gutter's downpipe. These divert the rainwater into the butt until it fills, allowing any excess water to flow away as normal. The instructions are clear and you need no great DIY skill. I managed to install one by myself in less than an hour! Even if there's no access or room to attach a water butt to the main downpipe from your roof, you could still harvest nearly 640 litres of water a year from a 7ft by 5ft shed roof. That's enough to keep 50 tomato plants healthy for up to three months!
10. To encourage more residents to save rainwater, many councils have schemes providing subsidised water butts that can cut start-up costs to around £30 or less for a standard 200-litre water butt. Head to your council's website to find out if there's a scheme open to you.

Even if there's no access or room to attach a water butt to the main downpipe from your roof, you could still harvest nearly 640 litres of water a year from a 7ft by 5ft shed roof. That's enough to keep 50 tomato plants healthy for up to three months!

Notes:

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The 6 R's

- **REFUSE**
- **REDUCE**
- **REUSE**
- **REPAIR**
- **RECYCLE**
- **RETHINK**

Plastic pots and containers are ideal for starting off seeds and seedlings. Just make sure to put drainage holes in the bottom if there aren't any already.

As well as turning garden and kitchen waste into compost if possible, it is so important that we reuse and repurpose whatever we can and segregate and recycle what's left.....

So many things that can be recycled:

- ✓ Paper & cardboard
- ✓ Glass bottles & jars
- ✓ Wood
- ✓ Metal
- ✓ Plastic
- ✓ Tin cans & drink tins
- ✓ Old clothes
- ✓ Electrical goods
- ✓ Mobile phones
- ✓ Batteries
- ✓ Ink cartridges

<https://www.recyclenow.com/recycling-knowledge/recycling-around-your-home>

RECYCLING

PLASTIC POTS, TUBS AND TRAYS: EAT, RINSE, RECYCLE

Lots of the everyday food items we buy are packaged in plastic. Most of us recycle our plastic pots, tubs and trays but some are still being thrown away.

We want to encourage people to recycle these items.



Benefits of recycling your plastic pots, tubs and trays

- Recycling plastic means we can reduce our need to create new plastic.
- Recycling plastic requires less energy than sourcing and processing raw materials needed to create new plastic, reducing our carbon footprint.
- Reduces emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere which contribute to climate change.
- Reduces the amount of rubbish collected and disposal costs.
- Helps us work towards our recycling target of 65% by 2035.

It's so easy

1. Remove the plastic film, absorbent pad, top or lid and put these in the general rubbish.
2. Give it a quick rinse, you can use leftover washing up water.
3. Put in out for recycling on your normal kerbside collection day.

What you can recycle?

- Clear meat trays
- Clear plastic takeaway trays
- Fruit punnets
- Pots e.g. yoghurt and soup
- Tubs e.g. butter/margarine
- Dishwasher tablet and washing capsule tubs



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