

## Make your own compost!

By buying a compost bin or making your own, you can start to make a real impact on the waste problem. Down District Council have a subsidised compost bin for just **£5** (Available from Down District Council, 24 Strangford Rd, Downpatrick. Tel 028 44610800)

### What is Composting?

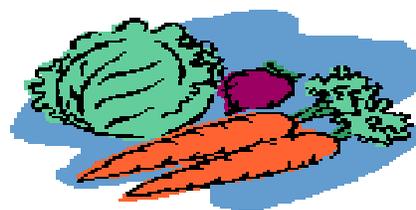
Composting is the entirely natural process by which nature returns the valuable nutrients contained in dead plant material back to the soil. By composting at home you can harness this process for your benefit. Instead of throwing your kitchen and garden waste away, you are able to use it to produce a valuable soil-improver.

### Why Should I Compost?

Composting at home reduces the amount of waste sent to landfill sites. Kitchen and garden wastes are known as organic wastes. Up to 40% of the average household dustbin is organic wastes and therefore suitable for composting.

Making your own compost saves you money by reducing the need to buy soil improvers and mulches from the garden centre or DIY store. Instead of taking your garden waste to the Civic Amenity sites you could save yourself the time and trouble of bagging and transporting it, by making your own compost at home. Applying home produced compost to the soil in your garden helps it to conserve moisture and requires less watering.

### Composting at home helps you AND Your environment.



### What can be composted?

The majority of your kitchen and garden waste is suitable for composting, however there are some things that you should avoid:

#### YES

Fruit & vegetable peelings, teabags, eggshells, dead plants, grass clippings, hedge trimmings, woody prunings, rabbit & guinea pig bedding, newspaper & cardboard.

#### NO

Cooked food, meat, fish, bones, dairy products, dog or cat faeces, bread, glossy, colored paper or cardboard.

### Summer Composting

Summer provides the warmer temperatures which drive the Composting Process. However, there are a few points to bear in mind:

**Grass Clippings:** Composting grass alone can produce a soggy mess. Tear a newspaper into strips and add, as a layer, before putting grass into your compost bin. After a couple of days mix it all up with a garden fork.

**Fruit Flies:** The tiny white flies that appear around the top of the Compost Bin. They are quite harmless and feed on exposed fruit & vegetable waste. Each time they appear, just sprinkle soil or cover with newspaper to cover the bin contents and they will disappear.

**Air:** The creatures that compost our waste need oxygen, just like us. During Spring and Summer, they are more active and need a steady supply. To keep them happy, agitate the compost bin contents with a garden Fork every couple of weeks, to provide air channels.

**Moisture:** If your bin contents do not appear to be composting, you may have added too many dry materials such as paper or twigs. Keep them moist by adding water as required.

**For further information Tel 028 44610800**

