

## Can Composter

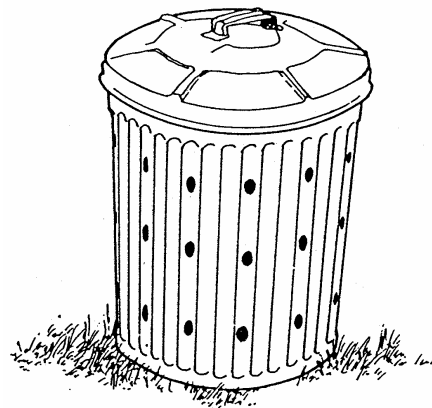
A can composter is an inexpensive way to compost yard materials or food wastes in a limited space. Check with local officials to be sure food waste composting is permitted in your community.

**Cost:** <\$25

**Capacity:** <1 30 gal bag of yard materials & kitchen scraps

### Materials:

- can with cover
- food wastes or green garden materials (nitrogen)
- straw, shredded paper, leaves, or other dried plant material (carbon) --- No glossy papers
- coarse untreated sawdust or wood chips
- bricks or cement blocks (optional)
- drill
- pitch fork, shovel, or compost turner
- work gloves



### Construction Details:

1. Drill three rows of holes 4 to 6 inches apart around sides of the can. Then drill several holes in lid and bottom of trash can. The holes allow air movement and provide drainage of excess moisture.
2. (Optional) Place can on the cement blocks or bricks to increase air circulation.
3. Place 2–3” of sawdust, straw, or wood chips in the bottom of the can to absorb excess moisture and improve drainage. Layer 1/3 nitrogen materials with 2/3 carbon materials (do not just use only wood chips or sawdust for carbon source as this carbon is not readily available to compost microbes). Top layer should be carbon to control odors and pests.
4. Finished Compost ready in 6-12 months; sooner if materials are turned and kept damp.

### **Revised 2/2004 by Kathy Powell, SHWEC Adjunct Faculty**

Other References: "Composting to Reduce the Waste Stream," January, 1991. Northeast Regional Agricultural Engineering Service, Cooperative Extension, Ithaca, NY 14853. Website: [www.nraes.org](http://www.nraes.org), and "Master Composter Resource Manual – Cornell Waste Management Institute.

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**For More Information, Contact Your County Extension Agent or SHWEC**

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**SHWEC** at <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/shwec>

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