

Who we are

Leeds Rotters aim to make Leeds a Composting Capital!

Huge amounts of garden and food waste is transported around the country using fossil fuels in the process. We are increasingly disconnected from nature and from the waste we generate. Composting is an easy way to get back in touch with nature and a way we can make use of some of our waste to make valuable compost for our gardens.

Inspiration for the Wheelie Compost bin came from

[Instructables](#)

<https://www.instructables.com/id/Make-a-Compost-Bin-From-a-Wheelie-Bin/>

Contact Us

If you want to know more about composting and Leeds Rotters then visit our [website](#) or Facebook page

<http://leedsrotters.org.uk/>

<https://www.facebook.com/leedsrotters/>



Make a Compost Bin from a Wheelie Bin



Leeds Rotters

What you need:



- Water butt tap
- Hinges
- Barrel bolt
- Nuts and bolts
- Large drill bit
- Bag of gravel (10-20mm)
- Plastic grill or membrane
- Blocks to stand bin on

We obtained our bins from [Forge Recycling](https://www.forgerecycling.co.uk/)
<https://www.forgerecycling.co.uk/>

Step 7

Harvesting your compost

Throughout the composting process liquid will accumulate at the bottom of the compost bin. Once diluted it makes excellent liquid fertilizer for your plants.

Depending what you are composting you should have a nice compost within 6 to 8 months but it may take up to a year depending on the coarseness of the material and how hot you manage to keep your bin.. Once your compost bin is about half full you could start adding a few worms, they will help speed up the composting process and they help to keep the heap aerated.

Once the compost has turned dark and crumbly it is ready to be harvested. This could take up to a year depending on how hot you manage to keep your bin. Now you can open the compost removal door and use your fork or spade to move the compost into a bucket or wheel barrow. If the compost is very coarse you may want to sieve it and return the coarser material and any un-composted material back into the bin.

If you have lots of material to compost you may want to make a second bin!

Step 6

Start filling your compost bin

You can now start filling your compost bin with a mixture of shredded green and brown waste. Green material is nitrogen rich and includes weeds, grass, leaves, etc. Brown material is carbon rich and includes wood chip, cardboard, straw, wood prunings, etc. It is important to have a mixture and not let one type of material dominate. The waste decomposes more quickly if it is shredded up first and the green and brown waste are well mixed. Ideally you should add at least 30cm depth of material each time. If possible add in some partially rotted material from existing compost heaps or some good soil to help activate your compost.

If the material is very dry then spray it with water to moisten it but do not soak it as this will then exclude the air that is also needed for composting to work.

The compost may noticeably heat up after a few days – this is good! Keep adding material to the bin until it is full. You could also use a fork to stir up the compost and get more air in.

"Old gardeners never die; they just very slowly turn into the most magnificent compost. But what a marvellous, active brew it is!"
Peter Cundall.

Building the bin:

Step 1

Drill a hole for the tap

The tap allows you to drain off the liquid that collects at the bottom of the bin and can be diluted to feed plants. The tap needs to be close to the base on a flat part of the bin. A hole saw drill of the right size is ideal but you can use a drill to ream a large enough hole. You will probably need a second person to fasten the tap in place.



Step 2

Compost removal door

This needs to be above the level of where the gravel and membrane will come to and hinged at the top. Too low and excess liquid will leak out, too high and it becomes difficult to remove the compost at the bottom. It needs to be wide enough for a spade.

Mark out its position, drill holes in the corners and use a jig saw or keyhole saw to cut it out.

Step 3

Fastening the flap

You may want to lie the bin on its back for this step. Put the flap in place, mark the position for the hinges, drill holes and bolt in place. Once the hinges are fitted then you can align, mark up, drill and fit the bolt followed by the bolt keeper.



Step 4

Aeration holes

If you like using a drill then this is the fun bit! Compost needs air to help it break down so drill lots of holes in the sides and back of the bin between 5 and 10mm in size. Don't drill them too close together or you weaken the bin. You could do them in a pattern or a word if you wanted!



Step 5

Final steps

Set the bin up on some concrete blocks, bricks or other secure structure to give easy access to the tap. Remember that once the bin is full of compost it will be very heavy so make sure you get it in the right location. Add gravel to the bottom of the bin to act as a sump for the liquid and put a grill or membrane over the gravel.

