

BOKASHI BINS

A step-by-step guide to
composting with Bokashi



What can I compost?

Almost all kitchen waste can be composted, which is a huge benefit of Bokashi composting over worm farms or traditional composting, although it's best to avoid large bones and excessive amounts of liquid.

If the item is derived from a living thing, it is able to be Bokashi-ed, including:

- fruit and vegetables
- prepared foods
- cooked and uncooked meats and fish
- dairy
- eggs
- bread
- coffee grinds
- tea bags
- wilted flowers and tissues
- paper towels
- onion



Frequently Asked Questions

- **Does the waste break down in the bucket?** No. The waste does not break down in the bucket; it is fermenting and will reduce in volume as it loses water content. Complete breakdown of the waste and the composting process occurs when it is buried in the soil.
- **Is white mould normal?** Yes. A white mould will appear – this is part of the fermentation process and is nothing to be alarmed about.
- **What if I am sensitive to smell?** If you have a sensitive nose, the bin may be best positioned outside.
- **Can I place contents in my compost bin?** Once the bucket contents are ready to be buried, you also have the option to place in your compost bin for further processing.
- **How deep do I bury the contents?** Ensure there is at least 10cm of soil covering the bin contents to reduce odour and lessen the opportunity for rodent activity.

How to Compost with Bokashi

1. Position the plastic grate inside the bucket on the ledge near the bottom of the bucket with the knob upright. Make sure the tap is in the off position.
2. Place your kitchen waste in the bucket and sprinkle a handful of Bokashi Mix over every layer of waste. As a guide, use approximately 1 tablespoon of mix for every cup of waste. Use more Bokashi Mix when adding high protein foods, eg meat, fish, cheese and eggs. You may choose to use spray instead of the Mix.
3. Check that the lid is closed tightly at all times.
4. Regularly drain the Bokashi juice produced using the tap at the base of the bucket.
5. Repeat this layering process until the Bokashi bucket is full.
6. After two weeks the waste is ready to be buried.
7. If you have two Bokashi buckets, begin the process again in your second bucket, allowing the contents of the first bucket to continue to ferment. Continue to drain off the Bokashi juice regularly.
8. Wash your Bokashi bucket after each use.



Helpful Hints

- Minimise the amount of rotten or mouldy food waste added to the Bokashi Bucket.
- Break or chop large waste into smaller pieces.
- Always close the lid tightly and remember to frequently drain the juice that accumulates at the bottom.
- Press down every layer of food waste in the bucket to remove air. Try using a potato masher or a pot lid, or pop your hand into a plastic bag.
- Do not add water or excessive amounts of liquid.
- Do not place the bucket in the sun.
- Wash the bucket well after each use.
- Don't be afraid to experiment with the process until you get a feel for how it can work best for you!

Burying Bokashi Waste

Dig a hole or trench approximately 20-25cm deep. Add the Bokashi waste and mix in some soil. Cover the waste completely with soil (about 10cm). Now forget about it – there's nothing else to do! Your soil has begun to be enriched on a microbial level.

For established gardens, dig the hole around plants or between rows of trees.

Be sure roots of very young plants do not come into direct contact with the compost as it may burn them. The compost is acidic when first dug in, but neutralises after 7-10 days. It is best to wait 2 weeks before planting. If you don't have room to dig a hole every time your bucket needs emptying, you can create a Bokashi compost heap, burying the waste in a regular spot in your garden. Once the waste has completely broken down, use it as a rich top-soil. Bokashi waste can also be added to a conventional compost bin.

Bokashi Juice

The amount of juice your Bokashi kitchen composting system produces depends on the type of food stored in it; so don't be concerned if little or no juice is produced. Adding fruit and vegetables tends to increase juice production. Be careful not to add too much Bokashi Mix as this can result in reduced juice creation. Take care with the tap. Do not unscrew more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of a turn. If you think the tap is blocked, try clearing with a skewer.

Using the Juice as Garden Fertiliser

Bokashi juice contains nutrients from the food waste and is alive with micro-organisms so it makes a terrific, free fertiliser! It is very strong so must be diluted with water at a 100:1 ratio, that's 100 parts water to 1 part Bokashi juice, approximately 2 teaspoons of juice for every litre of water.

Pour the concentrated Bokashi juice directly into kitchen and bathroom drains, toilets and septic systems. It will help prevent algae build-up and control odour. And as a huge bonus, it contributes to cleaning up our waterways as the good bacteria compete with the bad bacteria! Bokashi juice is best if drained often (twice weekly) and used immediately.

Note: Bokashi juice must be diluted prior to garden use.

Is my Bokashi working?

The Bokashi system is easy to use and it is highly unlikely that you will strike problems. A good sign it is working is the subtle smell of pickles or cider vinegar when lid is removed.

Occasionally, particularly for longer fermentation periods, a white cotton-like fungi growth may appear on the surface - a sign the process is working well.

Town of Cambridge

1 Bold Park Drive, Floreat, WA, 6014

(08) 9347 6000

waste@cambridge.wa.gov.au

www.cambridge.wa.gov.au



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