

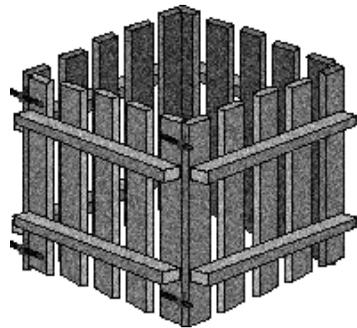
There are many ways to compost. The simplest method is to create a pile of yard debris – such as grass clippings, leaves and weeds – and just let them sit. For a more manageable compost pile, you may want to invest in a compost bin. Using a compost bin will help you pile more materials in less space, keep the pile neater looking and keep animals, wind or rain from knocking the pile over.

Composting using the holding bin system

Three low-cost compost bins are described in this brochure – a wood pallet bin, a circular wire mesh bin and a wood frame wire mesh bin. Each are “holding” bins that hold compostable materials as they decompose.

Just add water occasionally and you’ll have compost in six months to two years.

These styles of bins provide a convenient way to compost moderate volumes of material with minimal labor.



Harvesting your compost

To harvest your finished compost, simply take your bin apart and set it back up in a new location.

Compost from the top of your old pile can be turned into the bin in its new location. Finished compost can be removed from the bottom of the pile. Now you’re ready to start the process all over again!



What to do if you have more material than your bin can handle?

1. Make a new pile.

Take your bin apart and move it next to the original pile or to another location. The first pile can be left “free-standing” to decompose right where it is.

2. Create space in your bin by increasing the speed of composting.

Simply chop or shred yard debris as you put it in the bin. To maintain adequate moisture, water your pile and cover the bin with a plastic tarp or heavy fabric.

Turning the material occasionally helps speed up the process of producing finished compost. Mixing “green” materials, like grass, with “brown” materials, such as dead leaves, will also help. Using several materials and mixing them will produce finished compost more quickly than if you use only one type of material or the materials are not mixed together.

For more information about composting in Whatcom County, contact any of the following organizations:



WSU Whatcom County Extension
Master Recyclers/Composters Program

(360) 676-6736

whatcom.wsu.edu/ag/compost
e-mail: whatcom.compost@wsu.edu

Whatcom County Recycling Hotline

(360) 676-5723



Whatcom County
Public Works

(360) 676-7695

www.whatcomcounty.us/publicworks/solidwaste



Build Your Own
Compost Bin

Choose From Three Different
Styles

Using Your Compost Bin



Whatcom County
Public Works
Solid Waste Division

Wood Pallet Bin

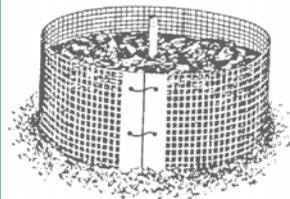
Wood pallets make an easy-to-build, sturdy compost bin. Not only that, they are readily available and usually free! Many companies still consider wood pallets a waste material. Ask if you can have them instead.

To make your compost bin out of used wood pallets:

- 1) Select four pallets that are the same size to make the four sides of your bin.
- 2) Connect each side by tying the pallets with string, rope or wire, or by nailing them with double-headed nails. However you connect them, be sure to do it in a way that makes it easy to take apart when you want to harvest your compost. Now you're ready to compost.



Circular Wire Mesh Bin



Cost: Approximately \$25-\$30 (depending on size)

Wire mesh compost bins are versatile, inexpensive and easy to construct. We suggest using a thick-gauge metal wire mesh for best results. You can also use 18-gauge, plastic-coated wire mesh or hardware cloth, although they are not as rigid as metal wire mesh and may require extra support.

Features

- Rigid metal wire mesh that resists dents
- Gate-style latch – easy to open and shut
- Easy to roll up for compact storage

Tool List

- Staple Gun or Hammer
- Metal File
- Wirecutters (if cutting wire mesh)
- Safety Gear (gloves and safety glasses)

Construction Details

- 1) If your wire mesh or hardware cloth is not already cut to size, roll out and cut a piece 11 feet long (or longer for a larger bin).
- 2) Trim ends flush with a cross wire to eliminate loose edges that may poke or scratch hands.
- 3) File each metal wire smooth along the cut edge for safer handling when opening and closing your bin. If you are using plastic coated wire mesh, strike the cut end of each wire with a hammer instead to crimp any jagged edges.
- 4) Attach a 3 foot long piece of wood to each end using a staple gun or hammer and staples.
- 5) Bend the bin into a circle and attach one hook and eye set at the top and one at the bottom of your wood supports and you're all set.

Materials List

- 1 – 3 foot x 11 foot piece of 1" x 1" wire mesh (weld wire works great). For larger bins, use a longer and/or taller piece of wire mesh.
- 2 – 3 foot pieces of 1x4 or 2x4 wood (decking or other pieces of scrap wood work fine)
- 2 sets – large gate latches - hook & eye style
- Staples or Nails

Wood-Frame Wire Mesh Bin

Cost: Approximately \$75

Wood-frame bins fit well in small spaces, look neat and clean, and can be used in a variety of ways depending on your needs.

Features

- Durable construction – longer lasting
- Gate-style latch – easy to open and shut
- Rigid metal wire mesh that resists dents

Materials List

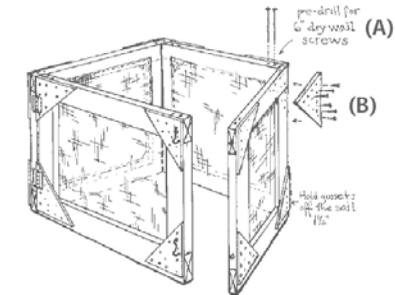
- 4 – 12 foot 2 x 4's
- 1 – 3 foot by 12 foot piece of 1/2" hardware cloth
- 1 – 15" x 30" sheet of plywood
- 100 – 1-1/2 inch galvanized No. 8 wood screws
- 4 – 3 inch galvanized butt door hinges
- 150 poultry-wire staples or staple gun
- 4 – large gate latches – hook & eye style
- Wood Glue

Tool List

- Table saw, circular saw or hand saw
- Hammer
- Screwdriver
- Wirecutters
- Small carpenter's square
- Pencil
- Safety Gear (gloves, safety glasses, hearing protection)

Construction Details

- 1.) Cut one of the 12 foot 2x4's into four 3' pieces. These will be the bottom piece of your frame.
- 2) Cut two of the 12 foot 2x4's into two 3' and two 29" long pieces.
- 3) Cut the remaining 2x4 into four 29" long pieces.



- 4) Cut the 15" x 30" sheet of plywood into 8 squares – 7-1/2 inches on each side. Cut each square diagonally to create 16 plywood gussets.
- 5) Make four square frames using the 3-foot long 2x4 pieces for the top and bottom. Use two 29" pieces for the sides.
- 6) Pre-drill each end as illustrated (A) and fasten with screws to finish your frame. Brace each corner with one plywood gusset. Fasten with wood glue and screws as illustrated (B).
- 7) Using your wirecutters, cut the hardware cloth into four 3-foot square pieces. Bend the edges of the cloth back over by 1 inch for strength. Lay one piece onto each of the four frames. Center and tack each corner with a staple. Then staple every 4 inches along all four edges, adjusting the tension of the cloth so it is tight.
- 8) Connect two of the frames together with two hinges. Repeat with the remaining two frames.
- 9) Attach the gate latches to the other ends so that the sections latch together and you're all done.