

Bokashi Bins

The most effective method of composting organic waste is to place it in an air tight container with an inoculant or compost starter known as Bokashi, before burying it in the garden. Bokashi is a Japanese term that means “fermented organic matter”. It is a bran-based, pleasant smelling material that has been fermented with a liquid concentrate of micro-organisms and dried for storage. It aids in the fermentation of the organic matter collected in the container. Always store EM Bokashi in a warm dry place out of direct sunlight.

What does a bokashi bin produce?

A bokashi bin produces two products, a juice and compost.

Bucket Juice – The amount and colour of the liquid drained will depend on the type of foods you have put into the bucket. Fruit and vegetables tend to release more liquid than other foods. Do not be concerned if little or no liquid is produced. The bucket juice should be used within a day or two after draining from the bucket. The liquid can be used for:

- The garden: this liquid contains nutrients from the food organics and is alive with beneficial microbes. To fertilise an existing garden or house plants use 1 teaspoon to 5l of water. Do not apply directly to foliage.
- Around the house: pour the concentrated liquid directly into your kitchen and bathroom drains, or toilets. The EM will help to prevent algae build-up and control odours.

Compost – The process in the bucket is fermentation and therefore the food will not breakdown or decompose while it is in the bucket. This product can be used:-

- In the garden: Dig a hole/trench approximately 20-25cms deep, add the fermented food organics and mix with some soil, then cover with the remaining soil. The fermented compost is acidic when first dug in but neutralises after 7-10 days. Bacteria in the soil and compost will start to break down the food and after about 2-3 weeks all the food will have decomposed. Alternatively you can add it to a bottomless bucket with a good lid that is buried up to its neck in the soil. Mix a little soil to each batch of compost that you place in the buried bucket. Be sure plant roots do not come directly into contact with the compost as it may burn the roots particularly if the plants are very young.
- Around trees: Dig deep holes 25-30cms deep at 60cm intervals around the tree drip line. Bury the fermented food in the holes as before. The compost will supply your plants with a great food source and will inoculate your soil with useful microbes for your plants.

How do I set up a Bokashi bin?

- Sprinkle a little Bokashi into the bottom of a 5 or 10 litre bucket.
- Place your food scraps or meal leftovers in the bucket and coat them evenly with some more Bokashi
- Use approximately one handful of Bokashi to every 3-4 cms of food. Use more Bokashi in the summer when adding high protein foods such as meat, fish, cheese and eggs.
- Repeat this layering process until the bucket is full, then top up with a generous coat of Bokashi.

- Press down to remove air on every application of kitchen organics. A plastic bag can be used for this.
- Try to keep the material as dry as possible as excess moisture in the bucket may cause odours during the fermentation process. Keep the bucket sealed between uses.
- Break up extremely large pieces such as cabbage stalks to assist fermentation.
- Drain the liquid frequently from the bucket. (At least every 2 days.) This can be diluted to 1:100 and applied to the soil.
- When full, coat the top layer with a generous sprinkling of Compost-Zing and seal the lid on the bucket. Stand in a warm place for at least 48 hours to allow the fermentation process to continue.
- Your fermented food waste is now ready for use!

Where can I buy a Bokashi bin?

Bokashi bins can be purchased at any branch of Commonsense Organics. Bulk orders can be made to NZ Nature Farming Society (NZNFS) on the web: www.emnz.com. For further information email: nznfs@paradise.net.nz.

What can go in a Bokashi Bin?

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Any kitchen organics including:	All liquids such as:
Prepared foods	Milk
Cooked and uncooked meats, and fish	Orange juice
Cheese	Oils
Eggs	Paper and plastic wrap
Bread	Meat bones
Coffee grinds	
Tea Bags	
Wilted flowers	

Maintenance

Make sure to close the lid tightly every time you add food to the bucket. The microorganisms need an air-tight environment to do their job. Once the bucket is full store it away from direct sunlight in the washroom or shed. Let the material ferment for a minimum of 48 hrs OR preferably for up to 7-10 days in the summer and 10-14 days in the winter. A second bucket is recommended to avoid breaks in collection and composting but not essential. Drain the juice regularly during the fermentation period. Wash the bucket thoroughly with water at the end of each batch.