

# HOTBINS - 170 THINGS TO COMPOST

**Key:** BioD = is it biodegradable; Rec'd Cold = recommended (or not, N/R) for cold heap, Rec'd hot = recommended for hot composting bin. Rate - how fast does it decompose (fast, medium, slow, very slow).

*Any item that was a plant or animal will compost. How easy and practical each item is to compost depends on many factors - eg what the waste is made from (sugars are easier to decompose than carbohydrates > proteins > fats/waxes > cellulose > lignin), size of pieces (small decompose faster than large). Waste is broken down faster at high temperature (X32 faster at 60C vs. 10C). In an appropriate hot composting bin, you can compost ALL food waste without attracting rats and flies. Individually each item of food waste does not make much compost, but collected weekly, a typical 4 person household will generate around 250 kgs of food waste per year. That is a couple of sacks of quality compost.*

Item		BioD	Rec'd Cold	Rec'd Hot	Rate Hot	Comments
Food	1 All food	Yes	Y/N	Yes		
	2 Apples, including pips	Yes	Yes	Yes	Fast	
	3 Avocado stones (pits)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Medium	
	4 Banana skins	Yes	Yes	Yes	Fast	
	5 Bokashi digestate	Yes	Yes	Yes	Slow	
	6 Bones: chicken, duck, bird,	Yes	N/R	Yes	Slow	OK to hot compost, chop large bones in half with secateurs
	7 fish Bread	Yes	N/R	Yes	Fast	
	8 Broccoli, stalks, greens	Yes	Yes	Yes	Medium	Chop large pieces to less than 4cm
	9 Cakes, buns, pastry Cereals,	Yes	N/R	Yes	Fast	
	10 bran, oats	Yes	N/R	Yes	Fast	
	11 Cheese	Yes	N/R	Yes	Fast	
	12 Chips	Yes	N/R	Yes	Fast	
	13 Cockle & mussel shells	Yes	N/R	Yes	Slow	Some can be very slow to compost
	14 Coffee grinds	Yes	Yes	Yes	Slow	
	15 Compostable bags	Yes	N/R	Y/N	Medium	Preferably shred, will take 1-3 months hot, +2 years in cold
	16 Cooked food	Yes	N/R	Yes	Fast	Yes in hot heap, no in cold heaps - it attracts rats and flies
	17 Corn, corn on cob	Yes	Yes	Yes	Medium	Ensure chopped up (<4cm).
	18 Crab & Lobster shells	Yes	N/R	Yes	Slow	Some can be very slow to compost

19	Defrosted (unfrozen) food	Yes	N/R	Yes	Fast	Must leave to defrost and chop up
20	Dairy products hard (cheese,	Yes	N/R	Yes	Fast	
21	butter) Dairy products soft	Yes	N/R	No	Fast	Water content to high for effective hot composting
22	(yoghurt, milk) Egg shells	Yes	Yes	Yes	Slow	
23	Fats & cooking oil	Yes	N/R	Yes	Medium	Small quantities mixed in, but not half bottle loads
24	Fish and chip left leftovers	Yes	N/R	Yes	Fast	
25	Fish 'n' chip box / paper	Yes	N/R	Yes	Medium	Card and compostable trays, not polystyrene
26	Fish, skins, bones	Yes	N/R	Yes	Fast	
27	Flour	Yes	Yes	Yes	Fast	Sprinkle in, avoid large piles
28	Fruits (apples, pears, peaches, plums, mango, bananas, oranges, etc)					All fruits will compost. Stones/nuts take longer. See also citrus fruits and wet foods for melon/water melon
29	Frozen foods	Yes	N/R	No	Medium	Frozen food takes too much heat from the heap
30	Citrus fruits (lemons, limes, oranges,	Yes	Yes	Yes	Medium	All citrus fruits will compost. Avoid adding citrus fruit peel to wormeries.
31	Juice pulps (orange, grapefruit)					If adding pulp from juicing - take extra care to add bulking agent and balance excess water with shredded paper
32	Left over curry	Yes	N/R	Yes	Fast	OK as long as not very runny (ie liquid)
33	Meat, cooked meat	Yes	N/R	Yes	Fast	Ensure chopped up (<4cm). No large bones)
34	Melons	Yes	Yes	Yes	Fast	Seeds likely to survive cold composting
35	Nuts, stones, cherries, avocado, peanuts, pistachio, etc	Yes	Yes	Yes	Slow	Can take many years in cold. Smash with hammer to decrease time
36	Oils, palm oil, olive oil	Yes	N/R	N/R	Medium	Small quantities mixed in, but not 'half bottle loads
37	Onions	Yes	Yes	Yes	Fast	Avoid adding to wormeries
38	Pasta	Yes	N/R	Yes	Fast	
39	Pizza boxes	Yes	N/R	Yes	Medium	Tear into small strips
40	Pineapple	Yes	Yes	Yes	Slow	The yellow fruit will compost fast. Ensure waxy leaves and skin chopped up
41	Plate scrapings	Yes	N/R	Yes	Fast	All bits of food left on plate can be hot composted
42	Potatoes (peelings, whole, green)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Fast	Chop whole potatoes
43	Puddings	Yes	N/R	Yes	Fast	
44	Pumpkin	Yes	Yes	Yes	Fast	Seeds likely to survive cold composting
45	Rice, cooked	Yes	N/R	Yes	Fast	

	46	Roast chicken/duck carcass	Yes	N/R	Yes	Medium	Bones can be added to HOTBIN
	47	Salads (cucumber, lettuce, tomatoes)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Fast	Take care if large amounts - may need to add shredded paper
	48	Tea bags	Yes	Yes	Yes	Medium	Some take longer than others - depends on bag!
	49	Tomatoes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Fast	Seeds likely to survive cold composting
	50	ALL vegetable & peelings	Yes	Yes	Yes	Fast	Always cut up large vegetables
	51	Walnuts & jugalone	Yes	N/R	Yes	V Slow	Break nuts with hammer to speed up composting
	52	Water melon	Yes	Yes	Yes	Fast	Seeds likely to survive cold composting
	53	Yogurt, milk	Yes	N/R	No	Fast	HOTBIN does not like excess water. Best left out
	<p><b>Most things from a domestic garden can be composted with a little care and time. It takes longer to breakdown 'woody' materials. Shredding thick stems helps bacteria get to the soft digestible cellulose behind the protective bark. How long wood based wastes take to decompose depends on the size of the pieces and whether the wood pulp has be de-lignified in the pulping process. White paper and corrugated cardboard can be hot composted quickly while newspaper can take months. Wood chips 9-36 months tree trunks 10-20 years.</b></p>						
Wood based	54	Wood based waste	Yes	Yes	Yes	V Slow	
	55	Wood treated with preservatives	Yes	Yes	Yes	V Slow	You need to take care - so cross check the detailed FAQ, but modern preservatives are biodegradable and are compostable
	56	Card: cereal packets, paper	Yes	N/R	Yes	Slow	Can take a long time in cold, shred when adding to hot
	57	plates Card: toilet rolls, kitchen	Yes	Yes	Yes	slow	Can take a long time in cold, shred when adding to hot
	58	rolls Corrugated cardboard boxes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Medium	Can take a long time in cold, shred when adding to hot
	59	Egg cartons (Paper!)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Medium	Can take a long time in cold, shred when adding to hot
	60	Glossy magazine paper	Yes	N/R	Yes	Medium	Can take a long time in cold, shred when adding to hot. Read full post as this is poorly understood topic
	61	Laminated papers	Y/N	No	No	Medium	Most laminates are plastic or aluminium foil and are not compostable
	62	Newspaper	Yes	Yes	N/R	Slow	Can be problematic and take long time - best recycled
	63	Paper	Yes	Yes	Yes	Medium	
64	Printed & colour printed	Yes	N/R	Yes	Medium	Can take a long time in cold, shred when adding to hot. See full post	
65	Sawdust	Yes	Yes	Yes	Medium	Can take a long time in cold. Too much will block airflow	
66	Shavings	Yes	Yes	Yes	Slow	Can take a long time in cold. Too much will block airflow	
67	White office A4 paper	Yes	Yes	Yes	Medium	Shredded is surprisingly easy to compost	
68	Woody twigs and branches	Yes	Yes	Yes	V Slow	Chop / shred	
Garden	69	Accelerator powders	Yes	Yes	Yes	Fast	Questionable value
	70	Alfalfa	Yes	Yes	Yes	Medium	
	71	Autumn leaves	Yes	Yes	Yes	Slow	Can be hard to break down - add in small lots each week

72	BBQ skewers (normally bamboo)	Yes	Yes	Yes	V Slow	Just wood!
73	BBQ ash	No	N/R	N/R	-	Contains potash - good for some soils. Too much blocks air flow
74	BBQ briquettes / coal	No	N/R	N/R	-	Charcoal carbon is good for soils - but not big lumps
75	Bird feathers	Yes	Yes	Yes	Slow	
76	Bone meal (fertiliser)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Fast	Yes, can help composting
77	Branches	Yes	Yes	Yes	V Slow	Larger = slower. You really need to shred/chip
78	Chicken poo	Yes	Yes	Yes	Medium	Use to help achieve hot composting
79	Christmas tree	Yes	Yes	yes	Slow	Can take a long time in cold, shred when adding to hot
80	Coir - coconut husk fibre	Yes	Yes	Yes	V Slow	Takes long time, but fibres mix in
81	Couch grass	Yes	N/R	Yes	Medium	Really needs hot to ensure all bits gone
82	Diseased plants	Yes	N/R	Yes	Medium	High temperature kills diseased virus/bacteria
83	Deep rooted dandelion etc	Yes	C	Yes	Medium	
84	Fertiliser (eg Ammonium sulphate)	No	Yes	Yes	Fast	Limited value, high cost
85	Flowers, stems, dead heads, roots	Yes	Yes	Yes	Medium	
86	Garden snails (shells)	Yes	Yes	Yes	V Slow	
87	Grass	Yes	Yes	Yes	Medium	Grass is a large volume waste. It can be tricky in cold heap
88	Grass sods	Y/N	Yes	No	Medium	Will block airflow in a hot heap. Only the grass composts
89	Grass with weed killer on	Yes	Yes	Yes	Medium	Domestic weed killers are biodegraded - check instructions
90	Green leaves	Yes	Yes	Yes	Medium	Shred waxy leaves
91	Greens	Yes	Yes	Yes	Medium	
92	Ground cover, nettles, etc	Yes	Yes	Yes	Medium	
93	Hay	Yes	Yes	Yes	Medium	Stems of long meadow grasses (tends to be less stiff than straw)
94	Herbicides	Yes	N/R	Yes	Medium	Domestic herbicides are biodegraded. Check instructions
95	Herbicides, pesticides	Yes	N/R	Yes	Medium	Domestic pesticides are biodegraded. Check instructions
96	Humofix	Yes	Yes	Yes	Medium	Not needed, but can be added
97	Hydro gels (SAP, PAM)	Yes	N/R	Yes	Slow	Can also be added to soil
98	Japanese knotweed	Yes	N/R	N/R	Medium	Verdict still out on hot composting
99	Leylandii & conifer	Yes	Yes	Yes	Slow	Ensure well shredded, add in small amounts not one large layer
100	Lime (calcium carbonate)	No	N/R	N/R	-	Not biodegradable, Affects Ph - best left out
101	Moss	Yes	Yes	Yes	Slow	Takes ages - best fed in as small amount each week
102	Old compost	Yes	Yes	Yes	Slow	Great as inoculation - getting new waste started

	103	Other non native weeds	Yes	N/R	Yes	Medium	Seeds likely to survive cold composting
	104	Peat	Yes	Yes	Yes	Medium	
	105	Perlite	No	N/R	N/R	-	Can add to soil
	106	Pesticides	Yes	N/R	Yes	Medium	Domestic pesticides are biodegraded
	107	Pine cones & Pine needles	Yes	Yes	Yes	Slow	Seeds likely to survive cold composting
	108	Plants with fungus on	Yes	N/R	Yes	Medium	High temperatures kill disease fungi
	109	Prunings	Yes	Yes	Yes	Slow	Better shredded
	110	Biodynamic powders (eg QR, Humofix)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Fast	Not needed, but can be added
	111	Ragwort	Yes	N/R	Yes	Medium	Really need hot to avoid seeds germinating
	112	Rock dust, volcanic dust	No	No	No	-	Question the reason for adding small rock particles to compost
	113	Rhubarb stems & leaves	Yes	Yes	Yes	Medium	
	114	Seaweed	Yes	Yes	Yes	Medium	Ensure salt washed off
	115	Soil	No	No	No	-	It seems counter intuitive not to add soil - but large thick sods or layers prevent aeration. You only need a handful to inoculate a new heap.
	116	Slugs and snails	Yes	Yes	Yes	Medium	Kinder to add when dead - hot will kill them
	117	Straw	Yes	Yes	Yes	Medium	Stems of cereals, dried
	118	Twigs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Slow	
	119	Vermiculite	No	Yes	Yes	-	Can add to soil
	120	Weeds - dandelion, bindweed, buttercup	Yes	N/R	Yes	Medium	Safer in hot compost. Seeds likely to survive cold composting
	121	Weeds - horse tail, couch grass	Yes	N/R	Yes	Medium	Safer in hot compost. Seeds likely to survive cold composting
	122	Waxy leaves (ivy, laurel, holly)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Slow	Chop up, do not add thick layers, mix in
	123	Worms	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	
	124	Zeolite (cat litter white)	No	N/R	N/R	-	Can add to soil
From the house	125	Beer & Wine	Yes	N/R	No	Fast	Alcohol is biodegradable. The 5% does not justify the 95% water
	126	Brown packaging tape	No	No	No	-	Take care with cardboard boxes taped up
	127	Car oil	Yes	No	No	Medium	Oil is biodegradable - but used oil has metals from the engine block in and this should not be added
	128	Cat litter - paper	Yes	N/R	Yes	Medium	
	129	Celloptape (cellulose acetate)	No	N/R	Yes	Slow	A "plastic" that decomposes!!
	130	Chewing gum	Yes	N/R	Yes	Slow	It is biodegradable and compostable

	131	Cigarette butts	Yes	N/R	Yes	Slow	
	132	Coal	No	N/R	N/R	-	No lumps of coal
	133	Coal ash	No	N/R	N/R	-	Contains potash - good for some soils. Too much blocks air flow
	134	Coloured inks	Yes	N/R	Yes	Medium	Modern inks are biodegradable and contain no heavy metal
	135	Cotton clothes, jeans	Yes	Yes	Yes	Medium	You can compost jeans (all cotton fabrics - but try reuse them)
	136	Dog hair, pet hair	Yes	Yes	Yes	Medium	
	137	Fire ash	No	N/R	N/R	-	Contains potash - too much will block airflow
	138	Hair from hair brush	Yes	N/R	Yes	Medium	
	139	Left over dog & cat food	Yes	Yes	Yes	Fast	
	140	PLA starch compostable cutlery	Yes	N/R	Yes	Medium	Sold as compostable cutlery - ensure broken up to bits first
	141	Q-tips - cotton ends only	Yes	Yes	Yes	Medium	Time to take off a minuscule amount of cotton!
	142	Soap bits	Yes	Yes	Yes	Medium	
	143	Tumble dryer lint	Y/N	N/R	N/R		Depends on your clothes. Synthetic fibres will not compost
	144	Vacuum cleaner bags	Y/N	N/R	N/R	Slow	Hair, skin etc composts. Foil, plastic, carpet fibres do not!
	145	Windowed envelopes (Acetate)	Yes	N/R	N/R	Medium	Acetate plastic is biodegradable. Can you spot acetate vs shiny non-degradable? Don't go there - you will drive yourself mad picking bits of plastic out of compost if you get it wrong
	146	Wine corks (natural)	Yes	N/R	N/R	V Slow	Nature's super bark - highly resistant to decay. Even when shredded, will take years. Use them for other things
	<p><b>All manures can be composted. Some sites are adamant you should only add herbivore (plant grazing) animal manure to your compost because meat eating animal manures might contain pathogens. All manures and all waste can potentially be harmful to humans, other animals and plants. We advise no manure is added to soil 'fresh'. Composting bacteria, heat and time away from animal host gut all lead to destruction of faecal pathogens. Good hygiene is also key. Different manures have slightly different NKP values - but this is largely irrelevant - whether the manure is mixed with bedding (straw, card and wood) has more impact than which animal created the manure.</b></p>						
Manure	147	Bird poo (inc. Pigeon)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Medium	
	148	Cat poo	Yes	N/R	Yes	Medium	See our FAQ on composting faeces
	149	Chicken bedding	Yes	Yes	Yes	Slow	Bedding comes in many forms - check wood above.
	150	Chicken pellets	Yes	Yes	Yes	Medium	
	151	Chicken poo	Yes	Yes	Yes	Medium	Great aid to raising temperature in hot composting
	152	Cow manure	Yes	Yes	Yes	Medium	Check local regulations before taking farm manure home
	153	Dog poo	Yes	N/R	Yes	Medium	
	154	Horse bedding	Yes	Yes	Yes	Slow	paper Vs wood

	155	Horse manure	Yes	Yes	Yes	Slow		
	156	Human poo	Yes	N/R	Yes	Medium	we know it's a No for 99.9% population	
	157	Nappies	Y/N	N/R	Y/N	Medium	Certified biodegradable nappies are compostable. But check as many also have plastics bits that not!	
	158	Pet Bedding	Yes	Yes	Yes	Slow	Bedding comes in many forms - check wood above.	
	159	Pet poo	Yes	N/R	Yes	Medium		
	160	Pig manure	Yes	N/R	Yes	Medium	Check local regulations before taking farm manure home	
	161	Rabbit poo	Yes	Yes	Yes	Medium		
	162	Rabbit/guinea pig bedding	Yes	Yes	Yes	Slow		
	163	Sheep manure	Yes	Yes	Yes	Medium		
	164	Urine	Yes	Yes	No	Fast	97% water, 3% urea (biodegradable). Do not add water to hot composting	
	165	Zoo (elephants, rhino, lion, zebra, etc) poo	Yes	Yes	Yes	Medium	Different manures have slightly different NKP values - but it is largely a myth that 'super manures' exist. Whether the manure is mixed with bedding (straw, card, wood) has more impact	
	<p><b>Many plastics are biodegradable. However the common plastics are not. Plastics degrade in UV sunlight and UV degraded plastic is biodegradable. It can take a long time - but whether it is 50 or 500 years depends on the environmental conditions. Always check - is the time quoted based on seawater, landfill (anaerobic), soil (cold), hot composting (aerobic), exposed to sun, etc. Remember you see a list that says 'never' or 50,000 years, keep in mind - plants can be non-biodegradable: peat bogs +10,000 years; coal and oil +500,000 years.</b></p>							
Misc	166	Glass	No	No	No			
	167	Metals	No	No	No		Metals degrade but they do not biodegrade	
	168	Plastics (acetates, PVC, PU, PLA, Polyesters, nylon)	Y/N	No	No	Slow	These plastics slowly biodegrade. Times are measured in months (yes) to 50 years depending on the size of the pieces and the environmental conditions.	
	169	Plastics (PP, PE, PET, polystyrene)	Y/N	No	No	V Slow	These plastics degrade in UV sunlight and UV degraded plastic is then is biodegradable. These plastics are measured in 50 to 500 years - it all depends on the sizes of the bits and the environmental conditions.	
	170	Rubber, latex gloves and products	Yes	N/R	Yes	Slow	Natural latex (and synthetic latex) is biodegradable and compostable.	
	171	Vulcanised Rubber (eg Tyres)	Yes	No	No	V slow	The vulcanised rubber is very slow to degrade and or biodegrade.	
	<p><b>All items assume the item is waste – be that spoilt, mouldy, etc - don't squander food – it is well documented 60% of all food thrown out should and could be consumed by better human planning!</b></p>							
	<p><b>Unsure of the facts – go to <a href="http://www.hotbincomposting.com">www.hotbincomposting.com</a> and onto our FAQ/Help, type in item and read full description.</b></p>							

