

# Using the Kitchen Composter



## Top tips for successful Bokashi use

1. **Use enough bran.** It's nigh on impossible to use too much, and if in doubt, add a little extra. If you are adding high protein waste like cheese, eggs or meat use extra Bokashi bran.
2. **Don't put big lumps of waste in.** If you put a whole cabbage in the Kitchen Composter, it will take a lot longer to break down than a sprout. Chop things up to make sure there is a large enough surface area for the bacteria to work on.
3. **Squash it down well.** You can use an old plastic pot/potato masher for the squashing – make sure it's wide enough to have an effect, and tall enough so that you don't get bran all over your fingers.
4. **Keep the lid sealed tight.** Any air in the system will prevent it from working properly. If you want to go all out, fill a carrier bag with rice or something similar, and place on top of the contents.
5. **Drain it regularly.** Depending on what you put in, you might get hardly any, or loads of liquid. It's best to check it every couple of days, because allowing the liquid to build up will increase the smell. Dilute it and use as plant feed, or pour it down your drains to help clean them. Don't try to store it though.
6. **Keep the bin(s) at room temperature.** If it gets too cold, the bacteria will slow down, and the waste will start to rot as opposed to fermenting.
7. **The smell should be vinegary/fruity.** It's strong, but not unpleasant. If it smells bad or rotten, throw the contents away and start again.
8. **You can add anything organic to the bin** - meat, fish, dairy, eggshells, etc. Denser material like eggshells and bones however will take a long time to break down. The meat on the bones will vanish long before the bones will.
9. **To start the process off, put a layer of Bokashi bran at the bottom of the Kitchen Composter.** A sprinkling of Bokashi bran needs to be added every time you add some fresh waste.



**If the Kitchen Composter produces a foul smell or has a green/black mould growing on the surface** this is the result of:

- not closing the lid tight enough after each use
- not using enough Bokashi bran each time
- not draining the liquid regularly enough
- exposure to direct sunlight or low or high temperatures. Ideally you need to keep it at room temperature
- waste has not been sufficiently squashed down and so remains aerobic.

White cotton-like fungi growth on the waste is a sign of good fermentation.

**If you are generating too much waste for your Kitchen Composter.** Try to separate out anything that could go straight into the compost bin or heap (coffee, tea, egg boxes etc) or which might be slightly acidic (citrus, tea, onions) to reduce the amount you need to process and avoid high acidity levels which can slow down the fermentation process.

**The material produced does not resemble compost.** The food waste only ferments rather than breaks down in the Kitchen Composter. After two weeks sealed in the unit, the waste is still recognizable. When its added to your compost bin/heap or dug into a trench in the soil, it will quickly decompose.

**What to do with the contents of the Kitchen Composter after the fermentation process.** Add to compost bin or heap making sure the waste is covered by a layer of another material, such as grass cuttings. Alternatively, dig contents into a trench in the garden and cover over with about 8 inches of soil and do not plant for at least two weeks.

