

# Portable Wood & Wire Composting Bin



- This portable bin, which holds about one cubic yard of material, provides a convenient way to compost moderate volumes of yard waste with minimal labor. Yard waste is simply added to the bin as it is generated.
- With no effort beyond occasional moistening, compost will be ready in six months to two years.
- Mixing **green** (grass, flowers, brush) and **brown** (dry leaves, straw, shredded news-paper, tree trimmings) yard waste will produce the best results.
- Chop or shred materials, maintaining adequate moisture by watering and covering with plastic, cardboard, or heavy fabric. Turning the pile occasionally will produce finished compost in a shorter period of time.
- Texture of the finished compost will depend on the materials composted and how long they have been in the bin.
- This bin is quite flexible. It fits well in small places, and may be used as a yard material holding bin or as a portable yard waste

turning unit. It can be moved easily to turn piles or to harvest finished compost and create a new pile: simply undo the latches, pull the sides apart, and move it.

Unfinished compost can be moved to the new bin location, and finished compost can be removed for use in the garden.

- Construction requires basic carpentry skills and tools. Costs to build will vary with current lumber prices and choices. In 2003, it cost approximately \$100 to build the bin using new materials. Cost will be less if using recycled wood.



## Materials required:

- 4 – 12' cedar 2x4
- 152' – (12'8") of 36" wide 1/2" hardware cloth (wire mesh)
- 4 – 4" hinges with screws
- 150 – 1/2" staples or power staples
- 4 – large hook & eye gate latches
- 32 – 4" mending plates

## Tools required:

- Hand saw and/or circular power saw
- Drill
- Hammer or stapler with 1/2" long galvanized staples
- Screwdriver
- Tin snips
- Tape measure
- Pencil
- Carpenter's square

**Remember to use eye and ear protection.**

**MORE INFO ON BACK**

## Five Steps to: Natural Yard Care



**King County**

Department of  
Natural Resources and Parks  
Solid Waste Division



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## What kind of wood should I use?

- Avoid treated lumber: it contains arsenic that may leach into the soil & compost
- Cedar lasts nearly as long as treated wood, but without artificial preservatives
- Plastic lumber is a good alternative

## What is hardware cloth?

Hardware cloth is a sturdy wire mesh. It comes with or without PVC, or vinyl, covering. The production and disposal of PVC results in the release of dioxins, dangerous toxins known to be carcinogenic. King County recommends against using PVC-covered hardware cloth.

## Construction Details

1. Cut each 12-foot 2x4 into four 3-foot long pieces. Butt joint the four pieces into a 39" x 39" frame and join together with mending plates. (See photo at right.) Repeat for a total of four frames.
2. Using tin snips, cut four 38" long sections of hardware cloth. Check that each frame is square and stretch hardware cloth across. Where possible, bend the edges of the cloth back over 1" for strength. Center and tack each corner with staples, then hammer or staple cloth tightly in place every 4" along all four edges of the cloth. Retain cloth tension so it will not sag when filled with compost.
3. Connect the two pairs of frames together with two hinges per pair. Connect the two pairs to one another utilizing the hook and eye



gate latches on the ends so the sections latch together.

4. OPTIONAL: Build a fifth frame and use two more hinges to attach it on top of the square, creating a lid.

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## Questions?

Call the Garden Hotline at **206-633-0224** or email [help@gardenhotline.org](mailto:help@gardenhotline.org)

## Resources:

- Soil building and composting [www.kingcounty.gov/soils](http://www.kingcounty.gov/soils)
- Northwest Yard and garden topics [www.kingcounty.gov/natural-yard](http://www.kingcounty.gov/natural-yard)
- Download documents and find more information on Natural Yard Care at [www.kingcounty.gov/soils](http://www.kingcounty.gov/soils). Click on *Documents*

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Alternative Formats On Request  
206-296-4466 • TTY Relay: 711  
1-800-325-6165 ext. 6-4466