Longwood Gardens ® Compost Bin Guide

No Bin / Wire Bin

The most inexpensive way to start composting is to use no bin at all. If you elect to compost without a bin, you may need to cover the pile with a dark tarp to conserve moisture and help keep the pile insulated. Surrounding your pile with chicken wire can help contain it to a smaller area. (Note that rodents can be a problem in open compost piles.)
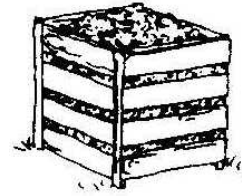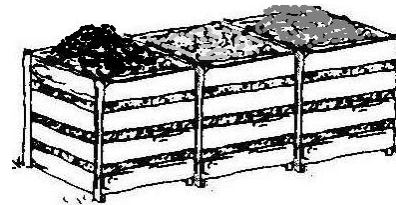
Wooden Single Bin

If you elect to build your own compost bin, use pressure-treated wood. Start with a $3' \times 3' \times 3'$ frame, and fill it in with wooden slats, leaving gaps to permit air circulation. Picket fence slats are an attractive option; if you paint them, do so only on the outside. Chicken wire can also be substituted for the wooden slats.
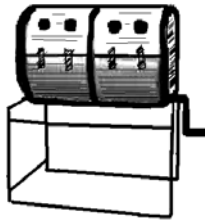
Tumbler Unit

A tumbler unit is a bin that can be rotated with a handle, eliminating the need for turning the pile with a shovel. Look for them in various sizes and shapes at garden centers, recycling centers, or online from a compost supply store.

Wooden Three-Bin Unit

For a permanent, sturdy structure that allows you to efficiently handle large amounts of material and produce an ample amount of compost, you can build a wooden three-bin unit by attaching three single bins. The first bin can be used for holding brown materials, the second for green materials, and the third bin for mixing and composting the materials.
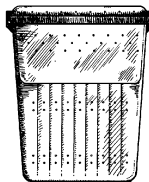
Other Pre-fabricated Bins

Pre-fabricated compost bins are available to fit all needs and spaces. Many have sliding doors that make finished compost readily accessible for home gardening needs. Shop for them at garden centers, recycling centers, or in online compost supply stores. Consider buying a container made from recycled materials to double your recycling efforts.

Garbage Can Bin

A garbage can or large plastic container with a lid works well for composting. Be sure to drill holes in the lid, sides, and bottom to allow air to circulate.