



HOW TO BOKASHI



The Bokashi bucket is a practical and convenient alternative for transforming kitchen waste into a nutrient rich soil conditioner. The Bokashi composting system creates the ideal conditions for airtight (anaerobic) composting, eliminating the odours and unpleasantness associated with decay.

Ingredients

You can compost almost every kitchen food waste including fresh fruit and vegetables, prepared foods, cooked and uncooked meats and fish, cheese, eggs, bread, coffee grinds, tea bags, wilted flowers and small amounts of paper.

Do not include liquids such as milk and fruit juice or meat bones.

How to compost using Bokashi buckets

- 1) Place your Bokashi Bucket somewhere close to where your food waste is produced - either on the kitchen bench or under the sink.
- 2) Place the drain plate supplied with the kit at the bottom of the bucket. This allows excess liquid to drain into the bottom of the bucket.
- 3) Place a 3-4 cm layer of organic waste on top of the grate before coating evenly with a handful of Bokashi.
- 4) Add your food waste to the bucket as you produce it.
- 5) At the end of each day, press down to remove air pockets using a mashing utensil or similar.

- 6) Add a small sprinkle (handful) of Bokashi over the food waste so that the entire surface area is covered. Use more when adding high protein foods such as meat, fish, cheese and eggs.
- 7) Ensure the airtight lid is resealed.
- 8) Repeat the process until the bucket is full. For an average family, this will take about 3 or 4 weeks.
- 9) Once or twice a week, drain the liquid that has accumulated in the bottom of the bucket and use diluted as a soil conditioner or drain cleaner (see instructions on use below).
- 10) When the bucket is full, empty the contents into a small hole or trench in your garden. The waste material will be fermented, but it will not be broken down at this stage - it needs to go into the soil to physically break down into humus (soil).
- 11) Rinse the bucket with water (no detergent or soap), drain and repeat the whole process.
- 12) In 2 to 3 weeks, the waste you have buried will then be mostly broken down into soil, and will be rich with nutrients, microbes and enzymes, all naturally produced.



Notes

Smell: Well fermented Bokashi compost should have a smell similar to that of pickles or cider vinegar.

Visual: Occasionally, particularly for longer fermentation periods, a white cotton-like fungi growth may appear on the surface. This shows that a good fermentation process has occurred.

- The waste material will not break down in the bucket - it will only ferment it. The physical break down of waste will only begin when you empty the bucket into the soil - and because it is already fermented, it will break down very quickly.
- You can leave your Bokashi Bucket when you go away on holidays - just make sure that the lid is sealed, you've added a layer of Bokashi, and the drain has been emptied. The longer you leave the bucket to ferment, the "sweeter" the material will be when you return.
- Be careful NOT to allow pets to eat the fermented waste. While there is nothing harmful in Bokashi, partially decomposed foodwaste can cause harm to some pets.

Using your compost

In the garden

There are a number of things you can do. You can bury the contents of the bucket directly into your garden around shrubs or trees or in a trench that can later be used as a growing bed. Just cover it up with soil or mulch (covered by at least 15cms of soil), and in a 2 to 3 weeks, it will have broken down into rich fertiliser for your soil. Bokashi compost is acidic when first dug in but neutralizes after 7 to 10 days, so be sure plant roots do not come directly into contact with it in the early stages as it may burn the roots. When the bucket is full again, you can do the same thing in a different part of the garden or part of the trench.

Alternatively, you can place the contents into your worm farm (but be sure to give them small amounts first so they get used to it) or directly into an outside compost bin (ensure that you have placed some soil or mulch on top to keep it airtight).

Using your liquid

The amount and colour of the Bokashi liquid produced 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 Bokashi liquid is produced. Bokashi liquid must be used within 24 hours after draining from the bucket.

In the garden

Bokashi liquid contains nutrients from the food waste and is alive with effective micro-organisms and makes a terrific fertiliser. Dilute the liquid with water at about 1:100 ratio, and water it onto your lawn, pot plants or garden beds. Do not apply directly to foliage.

Around the house

Pour the undiluted Bokashi liquid directly into your kitchen and bathroom drains, toilets or septic systems. The effective micro-organisms will help to prevent algae build-up and control odour. It will also help to clean up our waterways by competing with harmful bacteria.

Troubleshooting

Problems and causes

If you notice a strong rancid/rotten smell or the presence of black or blue fungi, the likely causes are:

- Not adding enough Bokashi mix.
- Not replacing the lid tightly after every use.
- Not pressing out the air pockets.
- Not draining the juice from the bucket.
- Prolonged or direct exposure to sunlight or extreme temperatures.

Solution

Find a spot in the garden, away from plants, and dig a 30-35cm hole. Place 3 handfuls of Bokashi mix into the bottom of the hole and tip the poor batch of compost into the hole. Mix with soil and sprinkle another 3 handfuls of Bokashi mix. Fill in the hole with soil. Wash the bucket and start again.

Also see our 'How to Worm Farm' factsheet. Visit www.earthcarers.org.au

The Western Earth Carers Programme is delivered by the Western Metropolitan Regional Council on behalf of:

