



# GROW YOUR OWN FOOD

## MAKING A COMPOST HEAP

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Compost is the king or queen of the garden. If you have the space and time to make your own compost, your garden will never look back and you will be helping reduce waste going to landfill.

As with most things in life, practice makes perfect ... in the case of compost, this has never been truer.

### WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW?

The secret to making compost is in the layers and the moisture level.

### HOW DO I MAKE THE LAYERS?

Layers should be made up of different materials no more than approximately 20cm thick. As you add each layer, moisten it thoroughly with water and add an appropriate organic fertiliser (blood and bone, chicken manure or cow manure), then add more water. Continue this process as you generate more green waste.

### HOW WET OR DRY SHOULD IT BE?

It is critical the compost heap is neither too wet nor too dry:

#### **Too wet**

A compost heap that is too wet or made up of too much of one material will become cold and smelly. To fix this, add some straw or hay and a good helping of organic fertiliser. Turn the heap thoroughly.

#### **Too dry**

A compost heap that is too dry will take a long time to break down. Turn the heap thoroughly, adding water as you go. A working compost heap should be quite hot because this indicates the breaking down process is working.



### TICKNER'S TIP

Michael Tickner, Adv Cert Hort (read Michael's profile at [www.chw.net.au](http://www.chw.net.au))

"Keep grass clippings to a minimum in your compost. If you have a lot, alternate layers of grass clippings with layers of straw or hay ... and don't forget to add organic fertiliser between layers."

If you have any questions about compost, ask your nursery professional for advice.

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