

Large Batch Composter & Compost Mixer

We designed the Gardener's Supply Large Batch Composter and Compost Mixer with innovative features to make composting easy and fast. The extra-thick walls retain heat to help keep the materials inside cooking. We designed wide 16" openings in both models so yard waste is easy to put in and finished compost is easy to remove. Molded from sturdy UV-inhibited plastic, with a lock-top lid, our composters are meant to stand up to years of rolling and mixing!

Both composters are batch composters. Instead of adding small quantities of materials every day, you put them all together in layers to make one big batch. If batch composting is new to you, we've included instructions and tips in this bulletin to guide you.

Note: No assembly is required for the Compost Mixer.

Large Batch Composter Assembly Instructions

The base and top half of our Rolling Composter (item #30-146) are nested together. Before you begin assembly, unwrap the halves and separate them. Remove the lid that is

inside the top half by lining up the 2 locking extensions with the 2 openings in the top.

1. Remove the hardware package taped inside the top section.
2. Place the top half onto the base of the composter, lining up the X's on the top and bottom.
(Note: If you experience any difficulty putting these together, place a flathead screwdriver between the halves to guide the top into place.)
3. Beginning with the hole near the X, place a washer onto a bolt and insert it into the predrilled hole.
4. From the inside of the composter, thread a nut onto the bolt. Do not tighten.
5. Insert the other 3 bolts, following the same steps. If you are having trouble aligning the holes, use a small Phillips screwdriver to twist the top and bottom sections slightly.

Insert the screwdriver into the predrilled holes (start from the outside, then locate the hole in the bottom half) and push so the

halves line up. Immediately insert the bolt.

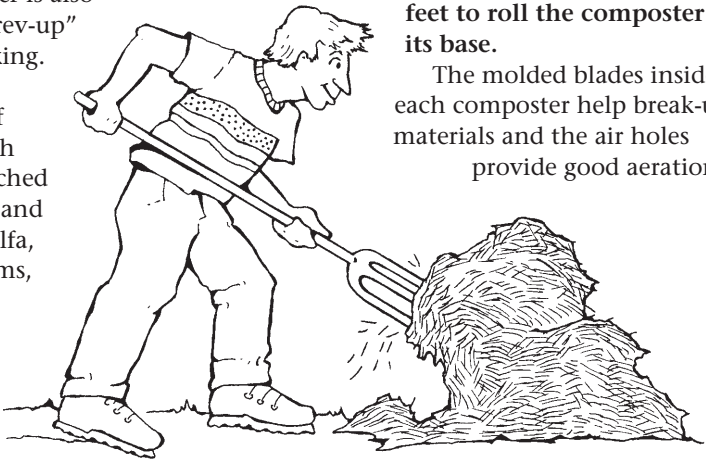
6. After all of the nuts and bolts are assembled, tighten them.

Batch Composting

Both the GSC Rolling Composter and our Compost Mixer perform best as batch composters. Making a batch of compost is like making a batch of chocolate chip cookies; instead of adding small quantities of materials every day, you put them all together in layers to make one big batch. (If you have a lot of materials you may need to stockpile them for each batch, or compost them in a bin.)

As you begin gathering material for composting, remember small, shredded materials decompose faster. Run the lawn mower over pine needles or leaves to speed the composting process.

Adding an activator like our Brown Leaf Activator will also help shredded leaves cook faster. This special blend of alfalfa, kelp, yeast and other organic ingredients also has billions of hungry microorganisms which are essential for quick composting. Our Super Hot compost starter is also available to “rev-up” compost cooking. It’s a two-part system of energizer (high nitrogen-enriched peanut meal) and activator (alfalfa, microorganisms, cocoa meal, and other ingredients).



Loading your Composter

For either composter, begin with the composter upright, layer 4 to 6" of dry, shredded leaves, small twigs, garden trimmings and/or straw in the bottom of the composter. (If you are using one of our compost activators, add it now.)

Then add a 2 to 3" layer of grass clippings, kitchen scraps and other nitrogen-rich materials. Sprinkle lightly with water. The moisture content is very important. Add water sparingly until the moisture is similar to a well-wrung sponge. Repeat the steps, filling the composter to within 10" of the top. Add a bit more water and lock on the lid.

The lid is designed like a key; it fits into the slotted openings on the top section. Line up the marks on the lid with the marks on the opening lip of the composter and turn the lid to lock into place. This will keep the lid secure while you roll the composter. To remove, turn the lid, line up the marks, and lift.

Once you have secured the lid, push the composter over on its side and roll it a few times to mix the ingredients.

For the Compost Mixer, use your feet to roll the composter on its base.

The molded blades inside each composter help break-up materials and the air holes provide good aeration.

Checking the Process

After 2 or 3 days, check the internal temperature of the center of your mix with a thermometer or by touch. Temperatures between 120 to 160 degrees F indicate the beneficial organisms are multiplying and doing their job decomposing materials.

Rolling the composter 5 to 10 times every two or three days will mix the materials and keep the process active. Check the moisture content, too, to ensure materials are not drying out. Squeeze a handful of compost to see if it feels like a damp sponge. If it does, the water level is fine. If it feels dry, add a little more water (be careful not to add too much) and roll the composter to mix well.

As the batch cools, continue rolling the composter every day or two. Depending on the material you added, the compost should be ready in 4 to 8 weeks. Finished compost will contain fine and coarse material. For a fine blend, sift the compost to use in potting mixes. Use the coarser compost as a nutritious top-dressing around outdoor plantings or till directly into your garden! You may also use finished compost as a starter for your next batch, or to heat up a batch that cooled too quickly.

To remove the compost, empty the first half with a shovel or fork, then tip the unit over to empty it completely.

For more information about the basic principles of composting, visit our Composting Department at gardeners.com.

Composting Tips

- Check the moisture level, keeping the batch damp, not soggy.
- Turn the composter every few days after the batch heats up.
- For the Compost Mixer, roll it on flat surfaces only—the composter could be tough to control on hilly terrain. (A full batch can weigh more than 100 lbs. If that's too heavy for you to push, consider making smaller batches, or get help rolling the composter.)
- Composting requires good aeration, so make sure you roll the composter 5 to 10 times.
- In fall and winter, a partially decomposed batch may be inactive until spring. To start it up again, add fresh layers of Brown Leaf Activator or Super Hot Compost Starter and some leaves, food scraps and grass clippings.
- Enrich your compost by adding bone meal, kelp, seaweed, alfalfa meal and other organic amendments as you layer the batch. (See Ordering Information on the back page.)
- Do NOT compost meats, pet waste, fats, bones, fish, dairy products, trash or plastic. These do not break down easily and will attract rodents and other four-footed creatures.

Ordering Information

- #30-146Large Batch Composter™
- #30-366Compost Mixer™
- #02-175Super Hot Compost Starter, 8 lbs
- #07-219Energy Buttons, 5 lbs
- #07-251Kelp Meal, 5 lbs.
- #02-260Compost Thermometer

To order, please call or visit our web site for current prices.