

COMPOSTING SERIES



Three-Bin System

Description

The three-bin system is a good way to organize a larger composting operation by having separate bins for each stage of composting. Organic material is added to one bin and then transferred to each subsequent bin as the material breaks down. A three-bin system may be used actively as a hot composting system or passively as a cold composting system.

Construction

Material: A triple-bin composting system may be constructed from a large variety of materials. Since the structure is intended to last for several years, we recommend using treated wood, metal or concrete blocks.

Size: The minimum size recommended for each bin is 3 feet wide x 3 feet deep x 3 feet high. Larger bins may be constructed to accommodate the amount of organic material available for composting.

Additional bins may also be added as needed.

Active Hot Composting

Hot composting is the preferred composting method since it will kill pathogens and weed seeds. To achieve this, the pile must be turned periodically to reintroduce oxygen and moisture to the pile.



1. Add compostable material to bin No. 1.
New material is only ever added to bin No. 1.
2. Turn the pile weekly until full.



3. Transfer all contents to bin No. 2.
4. Repeat steps 1–3.
5. Leave the material in bin No. 2 until the internal temperature falls to near ambient level.



6. Transfer contents to bin No. 3. Move large pieces back to bin No. 1.
7. Compost will finish and cure in bin No. 3. Use the compost in your landscape and gardens

Authors:

Christopher Dunaway, Assistant Extension Agent, Jefferson Parish; Achyut Adhikari, Associate Professor, School of Nutrition and Food Sciences; Bert Hammett, Extension Agent, East Baton Rouge Parish; Jeff Kuehny, Director, LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens; Juan Moreira, Research Assistant, School of Nutrition and Food Sciences; Anna Timmerman, Assistant Extension Agent, St. Bernard Parish and Joe Willis, Extension Agent, Orleans Parish.

Visit our website: www.LSUAgCenter.com

Pub. 3838-K (Online Only) 04/22

Luke Laborde, Interim LSU Vice President for Agriculture

Louisiana State University Agricultural Center, Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station, Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service, LSU College of Agriculture
The LSU AgCenter and LSU provide equal opportunities in programs and employment.