

A Guide to EM BOKASHI COMPOSTING



COMPOSTING WITH E.M. BOKASHI

EM Bokashi is a simple and effective way to process your kitchen food waste into rich compost that is good for the environment and diverts waste from landfill. It provides an alternative to composting and worm farming, particularly for households with less room for compost bins.

Bokashi is a Japanese word for 'fermented organic matter' and EM refers to the Effective Micro-organisms that work to ferment the organic material. The EM are contained in a bran/sawdust base and sealed in a bag.

BENEFITS

Because the EM Bokashi process is one of fermenting (rather than decomposing) and occurs in an airtight bin, it has several advantages over normal composting:

- It takes less time than normal composting to process food scraps – approximately 7–14 days.
- It produces a yeasty smell, a bit like home-brewed beer, which is less likely to be offensive.
- Like a worm farm, it produces rich compost and liquid fertiliser, but without the need to continually feed the worms, allowing you to go on holiday with a clear conscience.
- You can put in most organic material (apart from liquids) including meat, fish, citrus fruit, cheese, coffee grinds and tea bags.
- It is easy to use and produces healthy soil and plants.

GETTING STARTED

All you need is a bag of EM bran/sawdust and a bucket set, which consists of two buckets, one nesting inside the other. The inner bucket has drainage holes and an airtight lid. The outer bucket collects the juice.

Put the bucket under your sink or in your pantry and sprinkle a handful of the EM mixture into the empty bucket. Add your food scraps each day into the inner bucket, compressing them as you go. This is easily done with your hand inside a plastic bag or using an old potato masher. When you have a 3–4 cm layer of food scraps, sprinkle another handful of the EM mixture and carry on adding layers of food and Bokashi mix until the bucket is full. This may take a week or months, depending on the quantity of food scraps your family generates and the size of your bucket. Once they become wet, the EM in the sawdust are activated and begin to ferment the food.

It is important to drain off the liquid in the outer bucket every 3–4 days to keep the system as dry as possible.

The liquid can be diluted and used as a plant fertiliser (see below).

FERMENTATION

When the bucket is full, store it away from direct sunlight and let it ferment for one week in the summer and two weeks in the winter. A second bucket set is recommended so that you can continue processing food scraps while the first set is fermenting. The food in the bucket will not break down or decompose. Instead, you may be surprised to see the bucket is full of whole, brownish vegetables, much like pickled onions or gherkins in a jar.

USING YOUR COMPOST AND LIQUID PLANT FERTILISER

Dig a hole or shallow trench in your garden, empty in the fermented food scraps and cover with soil. The food is acidic when first dug in but neutralises after 7–10 days. For this reason it is not advisable to place it in contact with plant roots, especially if the plants are young. It breaks down beautifully into a great soil conditioner in a few weeks, releasing healthy EM into the soil.

Collect and use the liquid in a diluted form as a plant fertiliser. To dilute the liquid, add one teaspoon of liquid to five litres of water.

OTHER USES

There are many other uses for EM Bokashi, some of which are still being discovered. You may wish to try:

- sprinkling a handful of EM Bokashi mix on to your compost heap to activate your normal compost, or into your worm farm as a conditioner
- pouring the liquid down drains, toilets or sinks to eliminate odours.

To find out more about the EM Bokashi system, visit www.bokashi.co.nz

Detailed instructions are supplied with the bucket sets.



Foods you can compost

- Any kitchen organics including:
- fresh fruit and vegetables
 - prepared foods
 - cooked and uncooked meats and fish
 - other foods: cheese and eggs, bread, coffee grinds, tea bags, etc.
 - wilted flowers
 - tissue paper



Foods to leave out

- All liquids such as milk, orange juice and oils
- paper and plastic wrap, meat bones

Local suppliers of Bokashi EM and Bucket Systems:

Dougal Pollock

For sale at the Nelson Saturday Market
and other events

Phone: 03 542 4321 or 021 349 139

Komplete Komposting

Phone: 03 528 0395 or 027 227 8374

Email: kompostkevin@slingshot.co.nz

Michel D'Hont

Bokashi Logic at Riverside

Moutere Highway

LOWER MOUTERE

Phone: 03 526 7033 Ext 30 or 10, or 021 023 427 83

Email: em@riverside.org.nz

Nelson Environment Centre Reuse Shop

6 Vivian Place

TAHUNANUI

Phone: 03 548 5603

Open 7 days per week

Waimarama Community Organic Gardens

Upper Brook Street

NELSON

Phone: 548 4575

Open Mon – Fri