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## Introducing Composting

If you have outdoor or garden space around your building, why not try composting? This isn't as weird as it may sound to some organisations. Many groups already recycle organic waste in this way (e.g. leftover lunch food, fruit peelings, tea bags, coffee grounds or green waste from grounds maintenance). For those promoting local food growing, community gardening, recycling, and more sustainable ways of living it's another way of demonstrating visible commitment to lower impact living.

Composting increases awareness of just how much waste we throw away. A small worm bin can become a lively talking point! For some groups, having a demonstration area with different composting facilities (bins, homemade versions, wormery etc) can add value to your educational work.

Compost makes a great soil improver and saves money if reused on-site or for the office plants. Giving away any excess creates goodwill locally. Making your own compost avoids the use of peat-based compost.

Composting bins needn't look scruffy if this is an argument against having them. Well-designed units are available although making your own is a money-saving option. Once started, they don't necessarily need a lot of looking after (if used properly). Finding an enthusiastic person willing to keep an eye on them is the best way of ensuring smooth operation. Clear information helps reduce contamination (e.g. no plastic sandwich wrappings, bottle tops etc).

There is a serious side to the issue – waste legislation controlling what can go in landfill sites is getting tighter and local authorities are actively seeking ways of reducing organic waste. Increasingly, councils offer subsidised bins and special offers. Or you could see what's available at your local garden centre or buy online.

### Finding out more

- Garden Organic – the national charity for organic gardening <http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk> has a Home Composting resource which includes information to help groups promote schemes locally (<http://www.homecomposting.org.uk>)
- Try a local allotment group, food growing or horticultural project, local wildlife group and City Farms
- Some local authorities run 'Compost Awareness' events, discounted promotions or have a network of local volunteers ('Master Composters') able to help. Check your local authority website to see what's on offer.

- Recycle Now – national recycling awareness campaign <http://www.recyclenow.com>

Community Composting Network (CCN) – a membership organisation  
<http://www.communitycompost.org>