

The Quick Cook Method of Compost Making

Introduction

There are many methods of making successful compost, the quick cook method has been developed to have the following advantages.....

- Almost all plant material can be placed in the compost heap. Woody material up to 1 cm in thickness can be included. Do not put hormonally treated (herbicide) grass clippings into to the compost heap.
- No turning of this compost heap is necessary.
- Plant pests, diseases and weeds are successfully killed with this method.
- Vermin are not attracted to this compost heap, even if edible material ie waste fruit and vegetables are placed in the compost heap. Note as with any compost heap is not advisable to place any meat products in the compost heap.
- The compost will be available for use in three or four months.

Observations

The compost heap can be built up over a period of time, but for optimum efficiency should be made over a period of three months maximum.

The base to the compost heap must be solid ie paving slabs, this is to prevent nutrient loss into the soil and to prevent worms moving into the compost heap, which is not required with this method.

The concept behind this method of composting is that bacteria and fungi will break down very quickly the plant material producing humus which will hold on to plant nutrients.

The compost heap will reach temperatures of up to 80°C. Pests, diseases, weeds seeds and rhizomes and stolons of weeds are successfully killed with this method of composting.

How to construct the compost heap

- As with all compost methods it is important to ensure that oxygen is present in the compost heap. Only a small amount of oxygen is required as the compost is bulky and therefore will trap lots of oxygen as the compost is incorporated onto the heap. Only small holes are necessary on the side of the compost heap.
- Place plant material into the compost heap up to a height of one third the height of the compost heap.
- At this stage (the one third) place two shovel loads of good quality soil onto the compost heap and add two handfuls of Nitrogen fertiliser eg. Ammonium sulphate or Hoof and Horn. If using organic fertiliser please ensure that it is ground up into a fine powder. Note: the amounts are designed for compost heap which is 1.5m x 1.5 m in size.
- Incorporate more compost until two thirds in height is reached. At this stage add one shovel load of ground limestone (Calcium carbonate). This is essential to add as it will prevent the compost heap from becoming too acidic which is a common fault with compost heaps.
- When the top of the compost heap is reached add soil and Nitrogen fertiliser at the same rates as the one third in height.
- There is no need to cover this compost heap.

Final notes

Please remember that this method of composting is just one method of a wide range of different techniques available.

The quick cook method is very fast and efficient, but it is essential that the instructions as recorded in this handout are followed very carefully. It is also useful to know that clay soils prefer a compost which is not completely broken down in order to assist aeration and drainage when incorporated.

Sandy soils to prefer a well rotted organic matter containing a high percentage of humus , this will assist the attraction of water and nutrients to these soils.