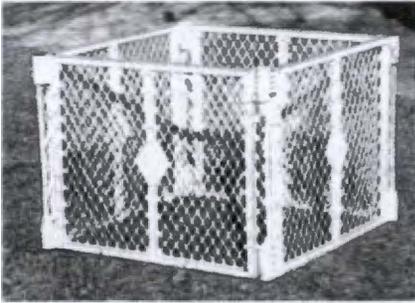


DO-IT-YOURSELF (INEXPENSIVE) COMPOST BINS

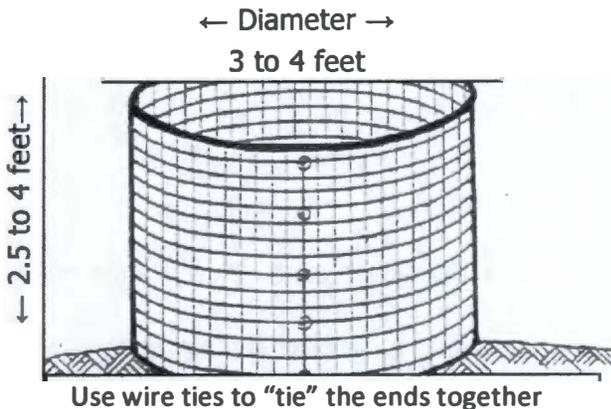
Based on information from the United States Environmental Protection Agency, food scraps and yard waste currently make up for 20 to 30% of what we throw away. Composting reduces what is taken to landfill, which leads to less methane emission. Landfills accounted for approximately 25.7 percent of total U.S. anthropogenic methane (CH₄) emissions in 2014, t (<https://www3.epa.gov/climatechange/Downloads/ghgemissions/US-GHG-Inventory-2016-Chapter-7-Waste.pdf>)

So let's get started composting. Your first adventure doesn't have to break the bank. Bins can be built from scrap lumber, old pallets, snow fence, chicken wire, concrete blocks, trash cans, concrete mesh, children's gates--the possibilities are endless. Here are few ideas that are inexpensive, and hopefully you can reuse items you have on hand.



Portable baby gates make a great compost bin. The set was purchased at a garage sale for \$8.00. It snaps open for easy compost turning.

Compost bin made from chicken wire, snow fencing, concrete mesh:



You can use: chicken wire, garden fencing, 1" mesh fencing, etc. Make a cylinder, limiting it to 3 or 4 feet in diameter. Fasten the cylinder closed, using short lengths of wire, plastic coated twist ties, cable ties, zip ties, or nylon string. When using chicken wire or garden fencing, I suggest using fence posts to secure the bin to the ground. You can pound the fence post in the ground and use wire ties to secure the fencing to the post. This keeps the bin secure, and the fencing upright.

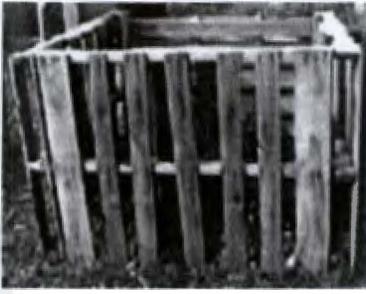
Approximate costs: Chicken wire (poultry fencing) 36"x25' \$11.00, fence posts \$2.65 each: \$22.00.



There are numerous different ways to use a trash can for a compost bin. It just depends on what you prefer, metal or plastic.

Drill three rows of small holes about 4 to 6 inches apart. Make sure to drill holes in the bottom. This helps with air movement and drainage. Some compost engineers suggest that you dig a hole in the ground 10-15 inches deep for the base to sit in. Drop a couple of bricks in the bottom, then add some straw, pine needles, wood chips, something to help with draining. Plastic trash cans start at \$15.00 and metal ones start at \$25.00.

Inexpensive Wooden Bins

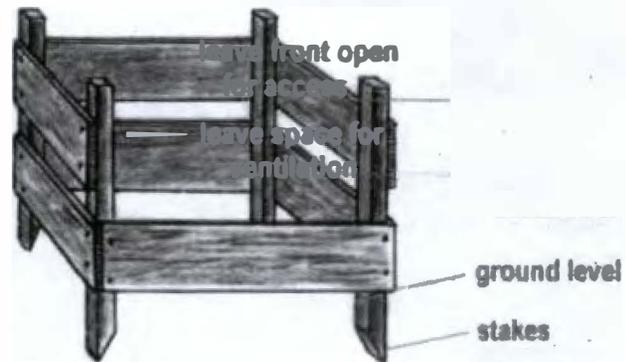


Find 4 used pallets (skids). Wiring the sides together, put the pallets together to make a square. This will give you a bin approximately 4x4x4. Pick one side to be the door, where you'll open the compost bin to turn the pile or remove finished compost. This "door" side is usually wired more heavily on one side than the other to act as a hinge. The other three sides should be securely wired, because there could be significant pressure from the weight of yard waste. The skids are heavy, and opening and closing the "skid door" might be more than you want to do. This is where chicken wire comes in handy! You can cut the chicken wire to fit the opening. Wire one side with wire ties, and close the other with a bungee cord. That way you can open the door.

Here is another inexpensive wood option. The best part: you can use scrap wood. You just need four posts the same height (don't use smaller than 2x2) and seven pieces of wood for the sides. The side pieces can vary in size--just make sure all the (side) pieces are cut the same length, and you have enough to hold the compost in.



offset nails
so they don't collide



What you'll need:

- 7 lengths of 2 x 6 lumber, each cut to 3'
- Four lengths of 2 x 2 lumber (or 4 x 4), each cut to 4' length, you can purchase 2 x 2's with a one edge already cut at a slant (to pound in ground) for \$1.00 each.
- Galvanized common nails 2 3/4" long. 28 nails; an alternative choice is to use coated decking screws

If you don't purchase pre-cut 2x2's with one edge cut, you will need to cut one end of each 2 x 2 to a point, to act as stakes. A hatchet works best--it doesn't have to be pretty. This will keep your bin in place. Nail the 3' boards to the 2 x 2's as shown. Leave space between the boards to help aerate the pile. Pre-drilling the nail holes will make nailing easier and prevent the wood from splitting. Set bin in place and drive the corners down into the ground with a sledge or heavy hammer. This style shows an open front.

You can always pick up hinges (such as at the Habit ReStore) and make a gate for the front piece. Use hinges on one side, and a simple hook or bungee cord to keep the door shut. If you can't find scraps of wood the right size, you can purchase 2x6x16 for approximately \$9.00 each. For around \$23.00 you can make the bin above.

If you don't want to make it yourself ...

Several types of composting bins are also sold online (try Amazon.com), and at hardware and lawn and garden stores. The City of Lawrence sells both a backyard composter and a kitchen composter:

<http://www.lawrenceks.org/wrr/lawncompostbins> - City of Lawrence

