

STARTING YOUR HOTBIN

Use this quick start guide to help you get hot composting in your **HOTBIN**. It is possible to reach 40-60°C within 48 hours if you have the right waste mix available, for others it might take a little longer. To keep the temperatures between 40-60°C you will need to feed the **HOTBIN** regularly. There is more detailed information in our extensive FAQ online at www.hotbincomposting.com.

1. Assembly and set up checks

Pull in cam straps **Fig 11** tight and open aeration valve **Fig 4b** to minimum.

There is no assembly required as your **HOTBIN** comes ready to use. Place it on a flat, hard surface preferably on a slab in the sun or shade.

The first thing you need to do is put on the two cam straps **Fig 11**. They should be pulled tight across the bottom and top of the Hatch panel **Fig 8**.

Your **HOTBIN** needs aeration. Please open the aeration valve **Fig 3** to its minimum position **see Fig 4b** as it will arrive closed. Also check nothing is blocking the aeration mesh plate **Fig 9**.

Remember heat will be lost when the lid is open, so unless adding waste, keep it shut at all times. Always check there is no waste on the wall lip, brush it into the **HOTBIN** to prevent it propping the lid open.

2. You need a base layer

This needs to be at least 40cm deep which is above the hatch door panel **Fig 8**.

A good base layer will have plenty of easy to digest waste that has been chopped up <4cm. To help the bacteria generate heat more quickly add bulking agent to create a good structure to maintain aeration.

Items like grass, chicken poop or pellets, shredded office paper and corrugated cardboard can help the bacteria generate heat faster. See the waste table below.

You may have enough waste available to get going straightaway; if so put it all in the **HOTBIN**, the more the merrier.

If you do not have enough waste, be patient, build up your base layer when materials become available. The temperature will build up more slowly.

Only add the very top layer of an old compost heap which has not composted as a **HOTBIN** needs high energy waste to get started.

You can add kitchen peelings to your **HOTBIN** at anytime. But only add ALL food waste if you are hot composting between 40-60°C.

3. It's cold outside

In winter you may need to give the bacteria a little bit of help **Fig 13**.

If you are setting up in winter; ask a neighbour for waste, add plenty of cardboard and shredded paper, use manure or chicken poop if you can get your hands on it or try chicken pellets from the garden centre.

If it is < 5°C outside use the Winter Kick-Start Heater. Its works in the **HOTBIN** due to its insulated properties and keeps the bacteria cosy for 1-3 hours allowing them to start generating their own heat. Simply nestle the hot water bottle into the top of the base layer and place fresh waste over the top, close the lid and wait 48 hours.

4. The temperature

In the early days you should only rely on the temperature from the long stemmed thermometer **Fig 11** inside the **HOTBIN**.

Although the thermometer in the **HOTBIN** lid is very convenient, it only measures the temperature of the gasses leaving the **HOTBIN**. So the **HOTBIN** needs to be around 50% full and running between 40-60°C before the lid thermometer **Fig 1** gives an accurate reading.

In the early days you should only rely on the temperature from the long stemmed thermometer **Fig 12** inside the **HOTBIN**.

5. Feeding your HOTBIN

To keep the temperature between 40-60°C you need to feed your **HOTBIN** regularly.

You should aim to feed your **HOTBIN** 1 x food caddies 2 x week as a minimum. Temperatures will fall if the **HOTBIN** is not topped up with fresh waste every 3-4 days.

As temperatures rise start adding ALL food waste mixed with bulking agent **Fig 15**. Mix in a ratio of 1 part to 10 parts food waste – This equates to 2 handfuls per small caddy of food waste.

If you are feeding your **HOTBIN** regularly the temperature should cycle between 40-60°C as you add waste and it is consumed by bacteria.

If your **HOTBIN** is not reaching 60°C go to the online FAQ. By far the most common cause is lack of waste and lack of easy to digest waste. The quick fix is to add cut grass or chicken poop.

6. Removing compost

Leave the hatch door panel in place until you are ready to collect your first batch of compost or wish to recycle the very bottom of the base layer.

Depending on your **HOTBIN** start, your base layer may not have achieved hot composting temperatures. If this has been the case take out the very bottom of the base layer at around 30 days and recycle it through the **HOTBIN** mixed with plenty of fresh waste for the very best results.

We advise waiting 30 days for mulch and 90 days for mature compost. It will vary as soft items like grass and cooked food will compost more quickly than woody items like twigs and pruning's and large lumps take longer than small pieces.

You do have a choice; chop things up before adding – or separate out large lumps at the end and reprocess them through the **HOTBIN** again.

WASTE TABLE

Bacteria digest some waste faster than others depending on texture, particle size and composition.

A way to look at waste is how easy it is for the bacteria to decompose it.

EASY

to digest and will generate heat more quickly

Chicken pellets & poop
Grass
Blood & bone meal
Nettles & comfrey
All food waste including:
plate scrapings, all meat & fish waste, pasta, rice, mouldy bread and cakes

MEDIUM

to digest and will generate heat more slowly

Vegetable & fruit peelings
Straw
Manures
Shredded office paper
Corrugated cardboard

NB smaller pieces increase speed

HARD

to digest and will generate heat slowly

Sawdust & shavings
Woodchip
Twigs
Branches
Newspaper
Cereal packets & card
Pet bedding

NB smaller pieces increase speed

NB When you have got your **HOTBIN** working efficiently at temperatures between 40-60°C there is no reason why you can't add things like chicken carcasses and bones into the **HOTBIN**.