



# Composting Chronicle

Welcome to the spring edition of the Composting Chronicle. With the coldest days of winter behind us, it's time to start thinking about how to best use your compost through the busy spring months which are fast approaching. If your compost bin is overflowing, don't forget to make the most of the March compost bin prices by visiting [www.leics.gov.uk/compost\\_bins](http://www.leics.gov.uk/compost_bins)

We would also like to thank those members who opted to receive future editions of the Chronicle by email and encourage others to do the same by emailing [recycle@leics.gov.uk](mailto:recycle@leics.gov.uk).

## Spring into action

Spring is a really important time for composters as it's the start of new life around your garden. It is imperative that you use your compost in the right way to get the best effect - so here are a few tips:

### New planting areas

Give new planting areas a boost by digging in as much compost as you can spare (up to four inches) into the top six to twelve inches of garden soil.

### Established planting areas

Established plants will benefit from an inch or two of compost worked into the top few inches of soil. Be sure to leave a gap between the compost and the base of the plant to avoid burning the stems. The nutrients will find their way down to the plant roots.



### Top dressing an established lawn

Spread up to half an inch of finished compost over an established lawn. Compost used as a top dressing for lawns should be fully broken down. Running the compost through a fine compost screen or sieve is a good idea to keep out any chunky bits. Large areas should be covered using a fertilizer spreader but smaller areas may be spread by hand or with a shovel. Aerating your lawn prior to spreading compost will be of additional benefit, enabling the compost to filter down under the soil more easily.

Don't forget to use some of the grass clippings from your garden with some cardboard or paper, as well as the teabags from your mid morning tea breaks to restock your composting bin in time for the summer.



# The History of Composting



We all know how to make, create and store compost, but do you have any idea about its origins? Well, here are three composting history facts you might not know;

**1** Composting as a recognised practice dates back at least 10,000 years, when settlers in Iran and Iraq noticed that plants grew better next to animal manure. They started placing it around their plants and the idea of composting began!

**2** The first recorded compost “recipe” was developed by a Roman Statesman, scientist and farmer named Marcus Cato over 2000 years ago. His system was the first recorded use of worm composting and was hailed as a wonderful soil conditioner.

**3** The Greeks, Egyptians, and Romans all practiced compost making and, in 50 BC, Cleopatra is reported to have made worms sacred after observing their composting abilities.

Modern techniques of composting have moved on since Cleopatra and the Romans, but who helped create the recipe for the sorts of compost we use today?

Sir Albert Howard is widely known as the father of modern organic compost making. He worked as an agronomist for the UK government during the 1940’s, but prior to this he spent 29 years in India observing local farmers’ methods of composting. It was during this time that he created a method of composting called Indore - which takes its name from the Indian town of Indore.

This method is based on using repeating layers of green waste with one part manure until the pile is around 1.5 metres high, making sure it is kept moist and turned regularly. The resulting compost is ready to go after about three months and ensures soil fertility and greater crop sizes with more nutrient value.

Sir Albert’s work influenced and inspired many farmers and agricultural scientists who furthered the organic movement, which is still growing strong today.

by Heather Jackson, Project Coordinator (Home Composting) Garden Organic





## Indoor composting with a Bokashi Bin

Composting is traditionally done outside and requires some space for a bin or box, but now there is an ingenious way of composting indoors to create a rich compost - perfect for households with limited outdoor space.

Bokashi is a Japanese system which works by pickling all of your kitchen food waste before transforming it into the most wonderful compost.

The system originated in Japan and works with the help of a special bran inoculated with good bacteria. Simply put all of your food waste into a container and sprinkle with the magic bran. Then add in peelings or leftover food until the bin is full, and leave it for two weeks - you can place it outside if you don't want to keep it in your kitchen.

This system works best with two bins as you can start to fill the other while the first bin is pickling the waste.

After two weeks the food waste will look largely the same apart from some white mould, but the bran has done its work on the inside. Bokashi waste breaks down rapidly into traditional compost and is perfect for adding extra nutrients to soil. You can add it to your compost bin or dig it into your garden.

If you, or someone you know struggles for outdoor space and would like to try a Bokashi Bin, you can buy a subsidised set of two for just £9.95 by visiting [www.greatgreensystems.com](http://www.greatgreensystems.com). Make sure you buy yours by the 31st March 2012 to make the most of the March sale.



# Great adventures start with Freeuseit.org

Caravan with  
a sea view **£350**



Beach  
toys **£6.50**



Messing about  
in a dinghy!

**FREE!**  
from freeuseit.org



A dinghy is just one of the more unusual items that you may find on [www.freeuseit.org](http://www.freeuseit.org) with over 100 items available you might just find what you are looking for!

 freeuse

 reuse for Leicestershire

Start your  
adventure with our  
brand new app!

Available on the  
App Store





# Watch your waste this Spring

Leicestershire Waste Partnership is offering superb deals on food waste digesters and composters this March.

Green Cones sit in your garden and enable you to get rid of leftovers, peelings and bones at home and help reduce the amount of food waste sent to landfill.

If you buy your Green Cone food waste digester now, it will be professionally installed for free. But you will need to be quick! You will still be able to buy Green Cones for a reduced price of £7.50 but our offer of free installation only runs until the end of March 2012.

Other units are also available at bargain prices if ordered before March 31st, including:

## • Green Johanna - Offer price now only £29.95

The Green Johanna is a 'hot' composter so it can compost both garden and food waste. The system will take approximately 6 months to start producing compost after which it can produce a rich compost all year round.

## • Komp 250 Composter - Offer price now only £14.95

The Komp 250 Compost Bin is a standard compost bin and can break down waste such as grass cuttings, hedge trimmings, twigs, paper, cardboard, fruit and vegetable peelings and tea bags - but won't take cooked food waste.

## • Bokashi Bin - Offer price now only £9.95

The Bokashi Bins will digest all kitchen food waste including fruit and vegetable scraps, raw and cooked meat and fish and dairy products.

All prices stated will be accurate from 1st March 2012 to the 31st March 2012.

For more details visit [www.leics.gov.uk/waste](http://www.leics.gov.uk/waste) and to place an order visit [www.greatgreensystems.com](http://www.greatgreensystems.com) or call the dedicated order line 0800 019 2061, Mon - Fri 9am to 5pm.

All prices include free home delivery. Offer available to Leicestershire residents only.

