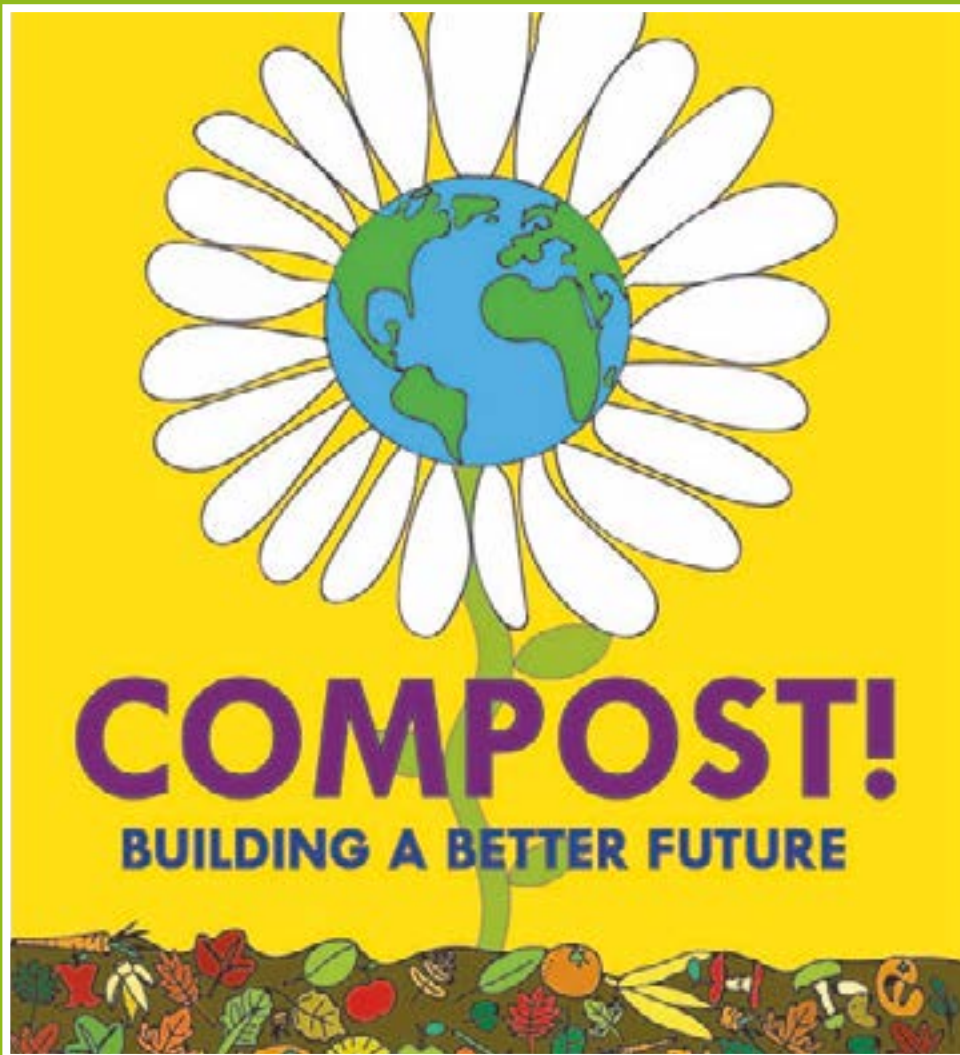


# Composting

CHRONICLE

Spring/Summer 2018

Hello and welcome to this springtime edition of the Composting Chronicle. This year Compost Awareness Week runs from 6th – 12th May with the theme “Compost! Building a better future.”



Our team of volunteers will be out and about at events across Leicestershire to chat about all things composting. To find out what events are happening near you, visit [www.lesswaste.org.uk/events](http://www.lesswaste.org.uk/events).

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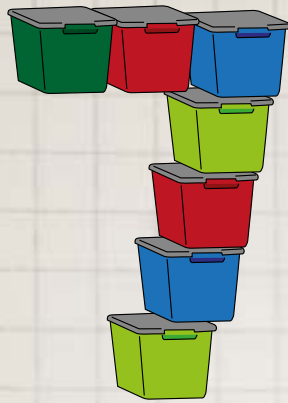
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Thank you to everyone that contributed material for this edition. If you've got any suggestions for future issues, please send them to [wasteprevention@leics.gov.uk](mailto:wasteprevention@leics.gov.uk)



# Recycling Sins in Leicestershire

Putting the wrong items in the recycling bin is known as contamination. Recycling bins that have been contaminated can cause huge problems once they reach the processing plant. This can result in entire loads being rejected and, as a result, recyclable materials are being unnecessarily sent for disposal. Here, we've listed some of the common items that mistakenly make their way into recycling bins:



**1 Food** – Food is not currently collected for recycling in Leicestershire, and putting food in the recycling bin can create difficulties at the recycling plant.

As long as the majority of food is rinsed out, a small amount of food residue in packaging shouldn't cause too many problems.



**2 Disposable nappies** – Nappies often have to be removed from the picking line by hand in their thousands.

Although the recycling symbol, or 'Mobius loop,' can sometimes be seen on the packaging, this often means that part of the nappy or packaging is made up of recycled materials, not that it can be recycled.



**3 Clothing and textiles** – Textiles can cause hundreds of pounds worth of damage to the sorting plant machinery, and can't be recycled once they have

been pulled out of the system as they may have become mixed in with shards of glass or organic matter. Clothing and textiles can easily be recycled at a local recycling and household waste site, clothing bank, or through a separate recycling collection.



**4 Black bin liners** – Recycling should never be collected in black bin liners. The crew collecting waste can't see inside, and would not want to risk it being full of contamination which could jeopardise the entire load.



**5 Electrical Items (WEEE)** – Electrical items can be easily recycled at your closest waste site or some local authorities may have a separate

kerbside collection. Recycling sorting plants don't deal with WEEE due to all of the different components made from different materials. Electrical items should never be sent for disposal via the general waste bin.



**6 Pyrex, plate glass, or window glass** –

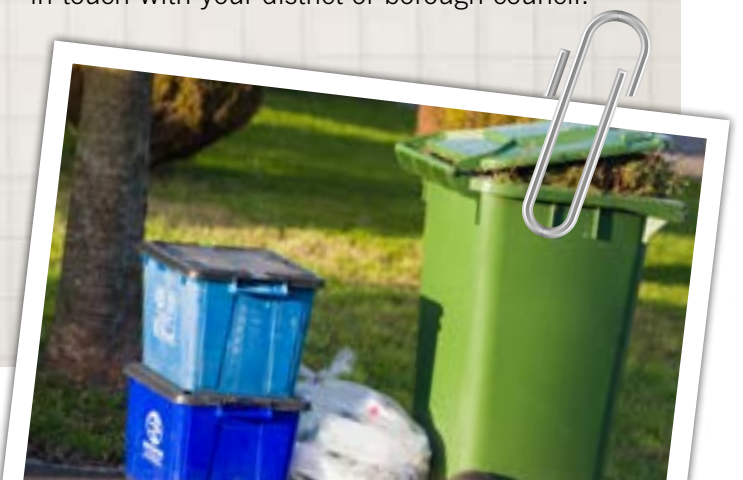
Although recycling sorting plants are not equipped to deal with this type of glass, they can be recycled at your local recycling and household waste site.



**7 Crisp packets and food pouches (baby or pet food)** –

These are currently not recyclable and should be disposed of in the general waste bin.

If you are ever in any doubt about which materials can and can't be recycled, please get in touch with your district or borough council.



# The Composting Year



## Springtime



### Starting a New Bin

Starting a compost bin in spring gives you the opportunity to take advantage of the warmer weather and the increased activity of the composting microorganisms and creatures. Once the temperature is consistently around 10°C, material can be added to the bin. Alternatively, wait until the grass on the lawn or allotment paths has grown enough to need cutting. Conveniently this provides a regular source of 'greens' to start the bin if there is little in the way of other plant waste available.

Turning the compost or aerating it regularly for the first few weeks allows air into its deeper pockets. Remember to mix grass with a plentiful supply of 'browns', such as shredded paper, corrugated cardboard, or leaves saved from autumn.



### Reawakening Existing Bins

An existing compost bin or heap will reactivate naturally as the temperature rises. The materials that have overwintered will recommence decomposing, although the addition of coffee grounds helps to wake up the bins - just as it does for us! As with a new heap, aeration will speed up the process and encourage the temperature in the bin to rise.

Cover your compost with a carpet, tarpaulin or a 'compost duvet' to prevent it from getting too wet in the spring rain as too much water can result in anaerobic decomposition.

The last remaining winter vegetables can be harvested, and their tops and trimmings added to the compost bin in March. April may provide spring cabbages, cauliflower and sprouting broccoli as well as weeds removed when preparing seedbeds. May will bring a further rise in temperature and will help to kick start the compost bin, annual weeds can be added to provide a source of fresh 'green' material before they produce seeds.

Spring is also a good time of year to harvest compost for use on the garden. Applied when the soil is moist, it can be used as mulch once the soil has warmed up in mid to late spring. Overwintered compost can also be used to make compost tea (a useful liquid feed) or homemade sowing and potting compost.



More composting information can be found on at [www.carryoncomposting.com](http://www.carryoncomposting.com)

# Composting Teabags

Recent news articles have cast doubt on whether a common compost bin staple – the teabag – will actually break down in our compost bins.

It has been revealed that although teabags are composed of mainly paper fibres and tea leaves, they are also around 20-30% polypropylene plastic, which is used to seal the bags shut and give them shape.

Although the biodegradable part of the tea bag will rot down, the plastic 'skeletons' will remain. They won't ever disappear completely, but may break down into miniature fragments. These can then be eaten by invertebrates and accumulate in the food chain, contributing to concerns about micro plastics in the natural environment.

Fortunately, once this was brought to the public's attention, the pressure on the teabag manufacturers led to many brands promising to switch to alternate fully compostable methods in the near future. In the meantime, emptying the contents of your teabags onto your compost heap can prevent plastic from entering the system, or have a go at using loose leaf tea!



# Compost Demonstration Sites

Looking for some compost inspiration this spring? Leicestershire has several volunteer led compost demonstration sites showcasing the best composting has to offer. If you're wondering about how to start composting, or if you're looking at investing in another bin, come and see all of the different types in action.

## Composting Corner – The Green Place

Master Composter David has diligently maintained the composting demonstration site at the Green Place in Sileby for over 5 years. A variety of different bins can be viewed including a triple bay set up and even a functioning composting toilet. David is happy to chat about all things composting, and can often be found on site. Be sure to also check out the excellent café while you're there!



## Melton Community Allotment Composting Area

Melton Community Allotment has been awarded a SHIRES grant to help them to set up a large demonstration composting area. They are hoping to be joined by groups and individuals to learn about composting and help people to reduce their collected waste. This will be a fully working compost facility too, enabling them to turn a waterlogged site into a fully functioning community allotment. They are hoping to be able to open the new composting site to the public in May.



## Harborough sites

Master Composters David and Judy have been working alongside other community groups in the Harborough areas to create compost corners at several different sites throughout the district. They have worked alongside churches, care homes, and allotment sites to set up working composting areas and educate others. To see some of their hard work in action, pop down to the Steven's Street allotment site in Market Harborough on their open day - Sunday 8th July.



# Dry Stone Walling

## Do you fancy learning a new skill this year?

Why not try the traditional craft of dry stone walling? Learn how to strip a section of tumbledown wall, identify and grade the different types of stone, and then rebuild the wall. Ongoing tuition will be provided for the duration of the course.



No previous experience required  
**Dates:** 22nd and 23rd September  
**Venue:** The Outwoods  
**Cost:** £70

To book please email [sam.village@leics.gov.uk](mailto:sam.village@leics.gov.uk)  
or call **0116 305 7264**.