

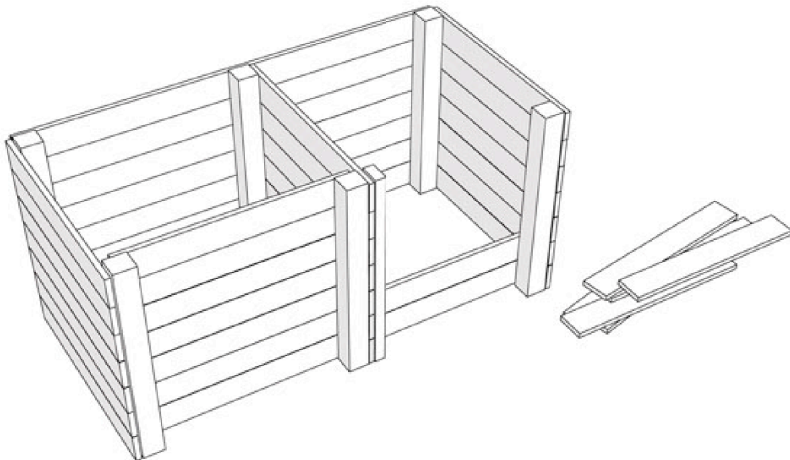


HOME COMPOSTING

A New Zealand Box

The compost heap is the garden's stomach. Spring and summer growth is so plentiful that we should always want to harvest and return it to the soil through the composting or digesting process. People with large gardens will probably need to build a New Zealand Box to cope with all this rubbish. This composting method will take up to 2 years, so it's best to plan ahead, by building 2 bays. Choose as sunny a part of the garden as you can spare, aiming to construct 2 square bays sharing one wall. Your Box should be built on soil.

1. Drive 6 x 150cm stobs into the ground to make 2 x 1 square metre plots next to each other.
 2. Cut 7 x 2m x 15cm boards and 35 x 1m x 15cm boards. Cut 1 x 1m rail [8cm x 3cm].
 3. Nail the long boards to the back and 21 boards to the sides to complete an E shaped construction.
 4. Nail the rail to the central section, on the opposite side to the stob.
- The wood for the fourth side of each box can be inserted inside the stobs or rail on each box.



During the first year, put all the compostibles into one bay, adding more as the heap settles. As you add material try to alternate layers of juicy green stuff with drier materials. At some times of year this is difficult so if you have too much green stuff add scrumpled paper and if you have too much stalky stuff add a 15cm layer of grass mowings.

In a hot summer you may need to water the top of your heap if it gets very dry. It pays to fork out and turn the heap as often as you have the energy, but certainly no less than once.

At the end of the gardening season, cover the heap with old carpet and/or bubblefilm to keep in the warmth over winter. A waterproof cover is a good idea. Leave it to mature for a season while you fill the second bay. The compost will be ready for use in the spring.

Advantages of New Zealand Boxes

1. Because they have a much larger volume, they will generate much more heat.
2. This heat will kill more weed seeds and pathogens
3. They are ideal for larger gardens, producing lots of compost.

Disadvantage

The heap does need to be turned from time to time.

For further information about home composting:



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Visit: www.askorganic.co.uk

Visit: Woodside Walled Garden, by Ancrum, Jedburgh

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