

Build An Organic Waste System

Want to take your kitchen to a new level of “green”? Tried a compost pile in your backyard and had to hide from your neighbors due to the smell? Tired of finding your compost items brought out to your front yard by the neighborhood animals?

Well, there is an alternative. Make a backyard food waste system and you can green up your kitchen by not throwing your food scraps into the trash and you won't be stinking up the neighborhood either. This is the supply list you will need:

- 20 gallon galvanized trash can, with lid. Be sure to look for a can with handles on 2 sides as well as a handle on the lid.
- Bungee cord
- Power drill with approx drill bit, suitable for metal
- Safety equipment – goggles & gloves
- Shovel

After assembling your equipment, all you need to do is start drilling holes into the bottom of the can. You'll want to make at least 10-15 holes spaced around the bottom. Next, lay the can on its side and start drilling holes in the bottom third all the way around. What you are aiming for is a drainage for your new waste system.

Once you have the holes drilled, you're ready for the hardest part of the project. You need to dig a hole in your garden area that is big enough to place the bottom third of your can into it. You want the can to be easily accessible so you will use it, but not right outside your back door. Try to locate it where you won't be digging through established root systems from trees or shrubs. You also want to take into consideration your view from the house or any outdoor rooms you may have; hidden behind shrubbery would be better than out in plain

sight.

When you have the can buried in the ground so all the holes are covered with earth, you're ready to put your system to use. You want to limit the items you put in the system to those without animal proteins. Any plant based items are fine. A good idea is to find a plastic container with a tight fitting lid that fits into your refrigerator – this can be your temporary holding area for your kitchen scraps. Storing the scraps inside the plastic container and inside your refrigerator will keep the scraps from smelling up your kitchen and you'll only need to empty them into the waste system when it is full.

When you place the plant scraps into the waste system can outside, be sure to securely attach the lid to the can with the bungee cord. This will ensure that no wandering animals get into it and ensure you don't find the contents strewn about all over your yard the next morning.

A 20 gallon can should hold the kitchen waste from a typical family of 4 for up to 9 months to a year before it gets full. Once full, simply leave the lid on and forget it for another 9 months to a year. At that point, you will have Black Gold, or rich, nutrient filled organic compost, ready to add to your garden beds.

Since you will need to let the one can rest for a year while the contents decompose, be sure to keep your eyes open for your 2nd can. This will allow you to continue with your food waste "System" Once you have 2 cans, they will just keep cycling through: one in use while the other one is decomposing.