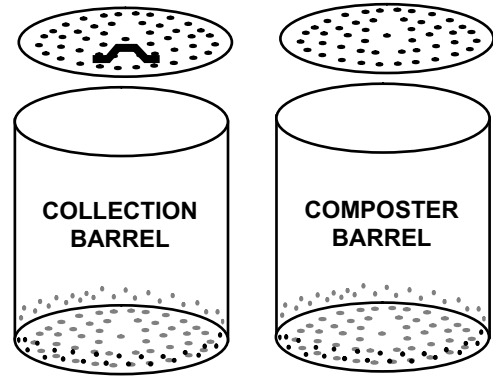


Easy Composting with the Two-Barrel System

Ever get downwind of the landfill on a hot day? Stinks, doesn't it. That's because of all the rotting food scraps being wasted instead of becoming sweet compost, as it would in nature. Well, you don't have to add to the problem. Now you can ecologically compost yard waste and food scraps in the backyard using the Two-Barrel System. Easy to load, secure against pests, fun to turn, and inexpensive to make. Here's how it's done.

What's Needed:

1. Two Identical Barrels - open-top plastic barrels. 30 or 55 Gallon size, the used/recycled industrial type are best - about \$25 ea. at local surplus outlets, look for matching lids, with removable band clamps for secure fastening. Standard blue plastic barrels are type 2 recyclable and are UV protected for outdoors. Avoid barrels used for petroleum or toxics. "Closed-top" barrels have only bung holes and will not work.
2. One Sturdy Handle - with stainless screws and nuts to fasten it to one of the barrel lids.
3. Electric Drill with 3/8" twist bit and a smaller drill to mount handle.
4. A flat, unsheltered, outdoor area such as a concrete slab, area of gravel, or bricked area to put the two barrels. Though house flies are rarely a problem with this system, fruitflies can be a minor nuisance, and some odor is produced. Select a site away from decks, porches, or places you like to hang out.



Construction Notes:

Drill 3/8" holes in the top and bottom of the barrels. 40 holes or so in each surface for 30-gal barrels, 50 for 55-gal size. Place the holes on ridges and high points on the top so only direct rain gets in. This allows air circulation without waterlogging in wet weather. The holes in the bottom should go around the lowest places to prevent puddling. Also put two or more rows of holes around the lower wall of the barrel to promote air circulation and to avoid waterlogging.

Fasten the handle to the front of one lid to allow easy one-handed opening of the collection barrel.

Place the barrels on the area you have chosen. You're ready to start composting!

How it works:

A mix of household food waste, lawn clippings, leaves, and even animal waste is put in one barrel over a year's time. At the end of one year, this collection barrel is sealed closed. The other barrel becomes the new collection barrel, but first it must be emptied of black, rich, garden-ready compost (sorry, none in the first year). This cycle then repeats every year for no dollars at all! By holding the mixture at composting conditions for a minimum of a year including the heat of summer, most seeds and contagious disease agents are killed. Countless bacterial species carried in by a myriad of mealy bugs and worms transform the rotting rinds and carrion scraps to black gold. All it takes is time. Mixing is OPTIONAL, (though it does give a better-looking product, and helps relieve aggression (see the "How To" Diagrams on page 2). Listen to the Collection Barrel on a summer evening. The rustling you hear comes from thousands of scurrying critters mixing the compost for you!

To foster this wild composting activity, **NEVER put anything toxic in the barrels.** This includes caustic lime, acids, disinfectants, chlorine, pesticides, herbicides, and petroleum products (gas, oil, etc.). Soaps and detergents are acceptable in small amounts. Add tree leaf mulch in moderation, as it is very acidic and may retard the composting process. Plastic, metal, large sticks, and stones will not hurt the composting, but also will not degrade.

What to put in the Collector Barrel: All table and plate scraps, vegetable and fruit peelings and rinds, eggshells (best if crushed), meat scraps (preferably cooked), smaller bones (larger bones are OK also, but may need to be picked out of the final compost for aesthetic purposes), small amounts of cooking grease and oil, paper including paper towels and napkins (but not waxed or treated paper), coffee filters and grounds, tea bags, dog and cat droppings (including small amounts of plain cat litter), sawdust and small chips, house plant clippings and spent potting soils, and even small animal carcasses such as mice, birds and road kill. Add layers of lawn clippings or mulch from time to time, especially to cover the larger rotting things (reduces flies and odor in summer). During times of drought, sprinkle both barrels occasionally to give the composing critters a drink, but don't drown them with too much water.

NOTE: there are many variations on the two-barrel composter, and many people have their own cherished methods and materials. find what works for your house, and

Keep on Composting!!!

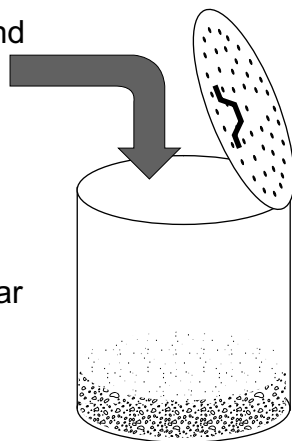
How to Compost with the Two-Barrel System

Step 1

Yard Waste and Food Scraps for a year.

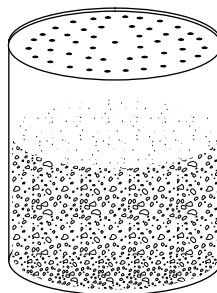
COLLECTION BARREL

Collects the raw materials over the year and begins the composting process.



COMPOSTER BARREL

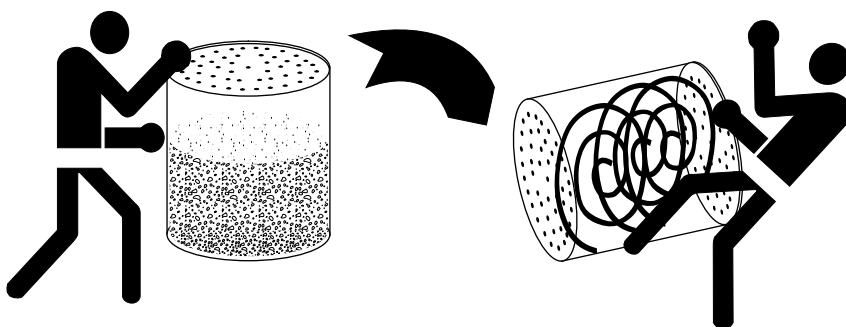
Sits empty the first year, or fill with yard waste at the start and let it all compost a full year.



Mixing (Optional):

Once a month, or whenever you need to vent some aggression, lock down the tops, turn the barrels on the side, and roll them around to mix the contents. Then stand them back up.

CAUTION: Barrels can be very heavy. Use care when moving.

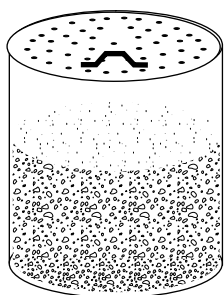


Step 2

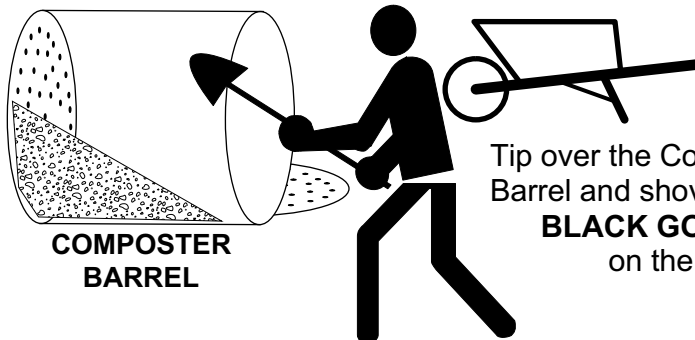
One year later...

COLLECTION BARREL

Has become full over the year.

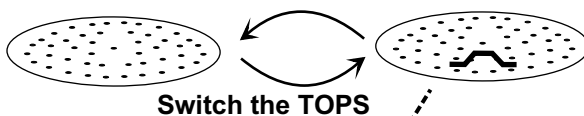


COMPOSTER BARREL



Tip over the Composter Barrel and shovel the **BLACK GOLD** on the garden.

The Collection Barrel is NOT emptied. It is now the Composter, and gets the lid with NO handle.

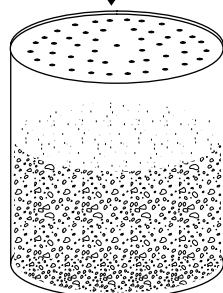


Switch the TOPS

Back to Step 1

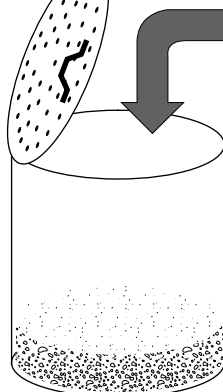
NOW COMPOSTER BARREL

Will be emptied next year at Step 2.



NOW COLLECTION BARREL

Yard Waste and Food Scraps for the next year.



There is a season, Turn, turn, turn.
For every compost, Turn, turn, turn...