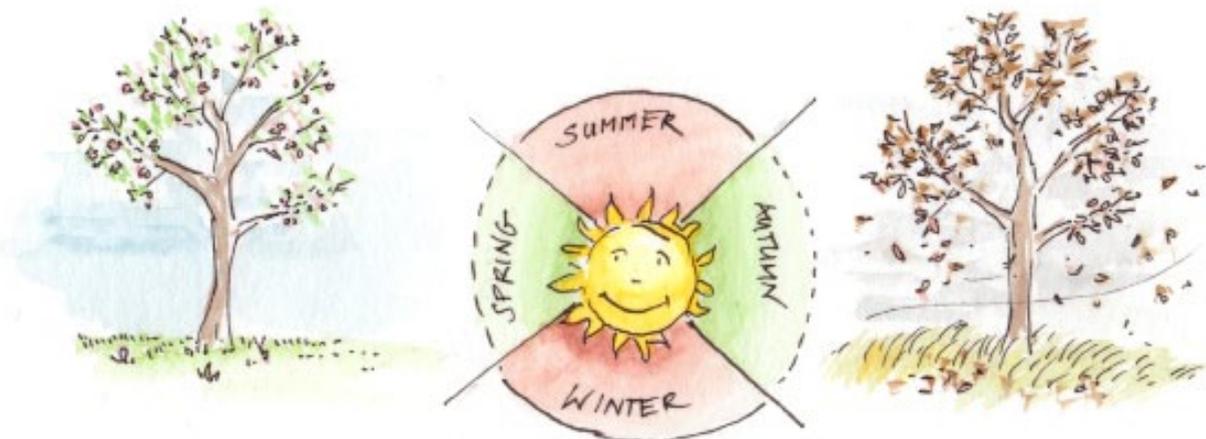


Plants grow more quickly on compost-covered soils and experience less damage from pests and diseases. Compost keeps the soil moist, protects it against dryness and is the key to successful gardening. Experienced gardeners know that a well-cared for compost heap is the 'heart of the garden'.



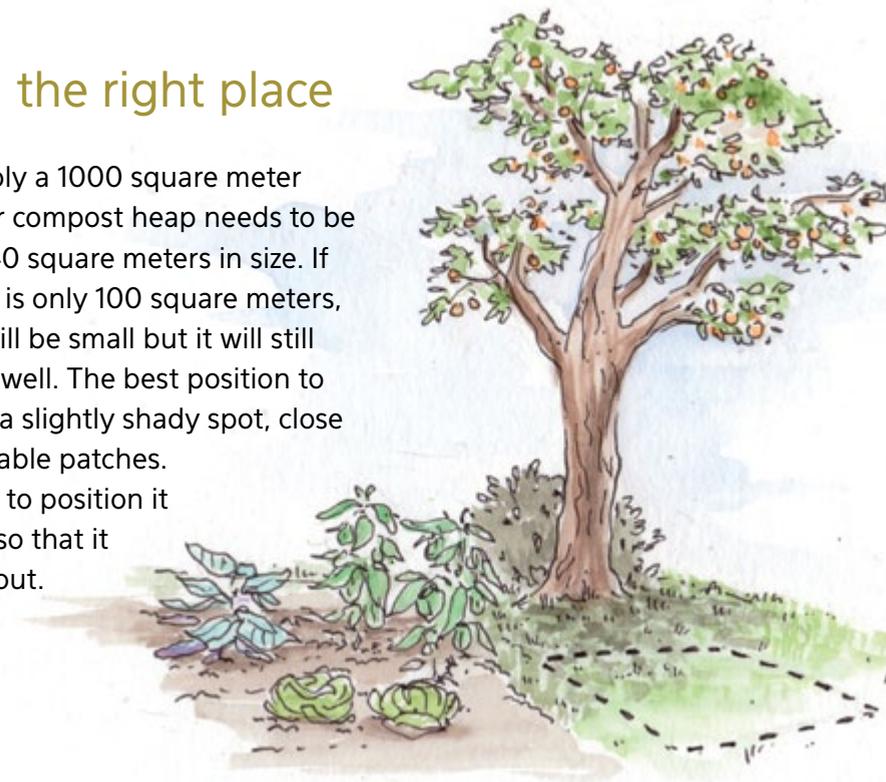
Most organic waste can be composted, but where you put it is important. Don't just throw everything in on top of each other. Putting things in layers, in the right order and the right position is crucial.

It is also important to start your compost heap at the right time. The best time to start building it is in either spring or autumn.

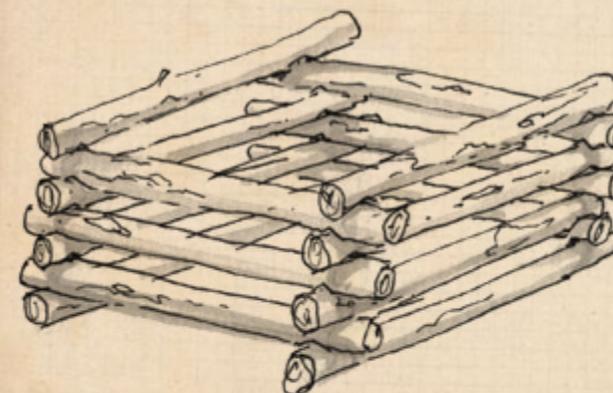


Finding the right place

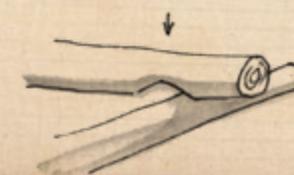
To fully supply a 1000 square meter garden, your compost heap needs to be around 20-40 square meters in size. If your garden is only 100 square meters, your heap will be small but it will still work just as well. The best position to place it is in a slightly shady spot, close to the vegetable patches. It's also best to position it under trees so that it doesn't dry out.



This illustration shows how to build your compost frame, and which raw materials to use.



If you build your compost frame with natural wood, it will attract the right microorganisms and stay well-ventilated.



a kerf helps stabilizing the construct



Manure from animals, ashes, lawn cuttings, hair, feathers, hedge cuttings, fruit peels, sawdust, coffee dregs, straw, eggshells, leaves, kitchen and garden waste all make great compost components!

There is only one golden rule: always make sure that dry materials are alternated with wet materials. This ensures the moisture levels in the heap are well-balanced.

As the illustration shows, the first layer of your compost heap should always consist of bush or tree cuttings. On top of this, a thin layer of chalk or clay is needed. Then you can add whatever ingredients you have available, but always make sure that grass cuttings are well spread so they cannot rot.

When the compost heap is full, cover the last layer with soil and straw and let it rest

What happens in the heap?

There are four major phases:

1. Warming up:

Carbon metabolizes and generates heat of around 45 degrees Celsius. The heat can rise up to 65 degrees. This phase lasts for between 2-4 weeks.

2. Fungi:

Intensive fungi grow for up to around 5 weeks. This helps provide food for bacteria.

3. Bacteria:

These are the detox products of your compost heap. Within 7-10 weeks they will produce plant fertilizer from organic matter.

4. Small animals:

Worms, caterpillars, mites, woodlice and collembolans are to be found everywhere. Earthworms do an especially great job in producing humus. You can see the compost is ready when the number of worms begins to reduce.

A healthy compost heap does not smell. If it does, this means there is too much rotting matter. You will therefore need to ventilate it with a fork and treat it with dry components such as chalk.

