



## Santa Cruz County Home Composting Program

# Choosing The Right Compost Bin

Successful composting systems can take many different forms and can be purchased or homemade. A compost pile can be as simple or as complex as you would like it to be. In choosing the right composting system, you should **consider the following questions:**

- Will you be composting food waste, yard trimmings, or both? Food may attract rodents or other animals to your compost. Consider a rodent resistant bin (no openings larger than 1/2") or a worm bin.
- What volume of composting materials will you be producing? How often?
- Do you have a big or small space to put your bin?
- Is there a chance that animals (dogs, raccoons, etc) will disturb the compost?
- What is your budget?

**The following list includes six different types of composting systems to meet your needs.**

**Worm Bins** - Worm composting is unique because it uses food scraps *only*, and no yard waste. It is ideal for people with very small yards, or no yard. Worm composting bins can be made in any size or can be purchased. A successful worm bin will not smell, can be harvested every few months and can be kept indoors or outdoors.

**Heaps** - This is the cheapest form of composting and is great if you have a moderate to large area to locate your heap. This system can be problematic if there are animals like raccoons, deer or dogs that are likely to scavenge the pile. A heap or open pile should be covered in the rainy season.

**Hoops** - This type of bin is inexpensive and can be made out of wire and stakes, or bought as an adjustable plastic enclosure, with or without a lid. Hoops are enclosed and are tidier than a heap and can be moved and covered easily, but are generally not animal resistant. Some hoops are adjustable.

**One Bin System** - A one bin system can be square, circular, or cone shaped and can be commercial or homemade. Most commercial bins have lids and ventilation and may be animal resistant. These bins are good for smaller yards, material volumes and areas with animals. Bins aid in moisture and heat retention. Many people prefer to have an enclosed bin because it is more attractive. However, they can be hard to turn and harvest.

**Multi Bin System** - This is a great system for a household or community space generating a significant amount of waste. This system is efficient, allowing you to have 3 working piles at different stages of decomposition and it is easy to turn and harvest. This style bin can be made animal resistant.

**Tumbler or Spinner** - These self-contained barrels, drums or balls rotate for easy mixing and fast decomposition. They are more expensive than other systems, but can be more convenient because they are easier to turn. These bins are fine for small spaces and are usually animal resistant.

Instructions for building these types of bins are available [www.compostsantacruzcounty.org](http://www.compostsantacruzcounty.org)

To make your own bin from reused materials check the **PROMAX** listings at [www.promaxreuse.org](http://www.promaxreuse.org)