

Composting FAQs

I want to start a new scheme but I'm not part of a group.

Speak to your friends and neighbours to gauge whether there is any interest in your area. You could put up a poster in your local shop, library or community centre (we can support you with this). Speak to us as we may be able to link you up with a group or people interested in composting.

How does the scheme work?

It is a closed scheme, open only to people from the local community who have signed up and received some basic training in composting. The scheme starts with two boxes; once the first box is full, we lock it and let it do its magic and start filling the second. All residents have contact details for the scheme monitors meaning that any issues can be addressed before they become problematic. All boxes are kept locked and only used by dedicated scheme members

Will it smell?

Compost is essentially broken down food waste so yes there is the potential for smell but with a well-managed scheme, with a good balance of wet and dry contents, smells are kept to a minimum.

Will it attract vermin & flies?

Tiny fruit flies are common in compost bins in the summer, especially if you are adding a lot of fruit and vegetable peelings. This can increase during the hotter months but can be managed by adding dry materials (cardboard) to the boxes which should be done by monitors and scheme members. This is another great way of recycling cardboard! Turning the compost so fruit and vegetables are buried will also help. Many people ask about rats. Rats are attracted to cooked food. For this reason we only accept raw fruit and vegetable waste, tea bags and coffee grounds to the bins. No cooked food, meat, fish or dairy is to be put in.

Do I have to be an expert?

No! We will give you advice and information so you know what you are doing. You will learn more as you go along.

What happens to the compost once it's made and how long does it take?

The average box takes about 9-12 months to produce compost. You are welcome to take some of the compost yourself or share it with other scheme members. If there is spare compost we work with many community gardens that are happy to take it.

Why don't the council collect food waste on Brighton?

The council says: "We do not currently collect food waste directly from households due to the different specialist collection methods needed. Around 1/3 of housing in the city are flats, and we would not be able to run a food waste collection service from them due to the communal nature of their collections.

When designing a sustainable cost-efficient service we need to take into account participation rates, types of property, cost and value for money, to ensure the service is suitable for the city. Our projects team continue to explore options and funding.

Instead we offer subsidised compost bins to all residents to encourage composting at home, including kitchen caddies which allows residents to make use of their own compost and is better for the environment. [Visit our composting page](#) for advice on the best option for you and details of discounted composters, food waste digesters and wormeries. Otherwise food waste for the time being needs to be disposed of in general refuse".