



## Welcome!

Welcome to garden enthusiasts and compost crusaders across Cumbria, and a special welcome to those who have signed up for one of the County Council's discounted compost bins, Green Cones or Green Johanna food waste digesters! We hope you find them useful.



Spring is here and you will start to see a lot of activity in your composter. You may also find you have more green waste as you start to venture into the garden.

If you have a full bin, now is a good time to empty out your compost bin and look at the contents. Anything you can still recognise should go back in, but anything that is broken down into nice earthy material can be dug into your garden. If you have too much compost you can store it in bags in a cool dry place such as a garage or shed, or give it to your neighbours.

We have answered some of your common composting questions below, but if you have any other questions you can contact us anytime by visiting [www.recycleforcumbria.org](http://www.recycleforcumbria.org) or searching for Recycle for Cumbria on Facebook.



### Top Tip!

Smaller material will break down much faster. If you put in items like broccoli or cauliflower stalks chop them up so that the composting organisms can get at the fleshy middle more quickly.

## Your compost questions answered...

### My bin is full of little flies, what should I do?

Don't panic! These are only fruit flies. They are completely harmless and live off the fruit and vegetable peelings you have put in the bin. They have a very short life span and are part of the natural composting process.



You will notice them more in the warm weather and they will normally fly out as you lift the lid, so be warned! Although they are harmless they can be unpleasant, but you can avoid them by burying any fruit and veg peelings below the surface of the compost so that they can't reach it.

Remember not to put cooked food, meat or fish waste in a standard compost bin too, as this can attract flies and vermin. If you want to recycle your cooked food waste, meat and fish try the Green Cone or Green Johanna food waste digester instead of (or as well as!) your standard compost bin.

### **My bin is too wet and sloppy, what should I do?**

This happens a lot during the colder months as more kitchen waste than garden waste is going in. The contents of your bin need to be moist but not sopping wet. If you find your bin is looking more like soup than compost you can soak up some of the excess moisture by tearing up a brown cardboard box and putting it into the top of the bin. Or use shredded newspaper, but not coloured magazines. Or you can use dry material like small twigs or straw from animal bedding to help dry up the mixture.

### **Why does my bin smell?**

Compost bins need oxygen to work properly. If it smells it's not getting enough oxygen. Try to stir the contents with a garden fork or poke a few holes down into it with a broom handle. If you have enough time you can empty out the contents and put them back in again to mix it all up. This also shows you what condition the compost is in inside the bin. Normally the compost should give off a natural earthy smell and should not smell unpleasant.

### **Should I be worried about rats?**

Rats may visit a compost heap if they are already present in the area but composting does not generally attract the rats in the first place. If rats or mice are nesting in your compost heap, this is a sign that the heap is too dry. Add water until it has the consistency of a wrung-out sponge. Rats do not like to be disturbed, so if you regularly add new material to your bin, rats are unlikely to settle there.

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## **Events**

Recycle for Cumbria will be attending a number of fab garden events across the county this Spring and Summer. Some upcoming events for May are listed below. Check [www.recycleforcumbria.org/events.asp](http://www.recycleforcumbria.org/events.asp) for more details. We are always adding new dates and events!



6th May – Riversmeet Garden Day, Cockermouth  
9th May – Wigton Library Garden Party  
9th May - Compost advice at Carlisle Library  
9th May - Compost advice at Barrow Library  
10th May – Compost advice at Kendal Library  
12th May - Compost advice at Penrith Library  
13th May - Compost advice at Carlisle Health Mela  
16th May - Millom Library Garden Party  
20th May – Keswick Library Garden Party  
26th May – Seascale Library Garden Party

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## **Next time...**

Next issue will be all about your lawn. We will have a 'how to' guide for dressing your lawn with compost and will also share our top tips for managing grass clippings, so that your compost bin does not become too wet.

**Serving the people of Cumbria**

