

MAKING A NEW ZEALAND BOX

The New Zealand Box is the ideal compost unit for large gardens.

The New Zealand Box takes between 18 months and 2 years to produce fine compost. This is slower than plastic compost bins, but the large wooden one has lots of advantages:

- You'll get rid of more garden and kitchen waste and harvest more compost
- You don't need to worry so much about mixing green and brown material – with a large volume of compostables, everything gets mixed together quite easily
- The heap generates much higher temperatures than smaller bins
- Since the composting process takes 2 years, you should be able to add a small amount of perennial weeds, like dandelions or nettles. (If you can still see their roots after 2 years, they'll be alive, so put them back in a bin for another year.)

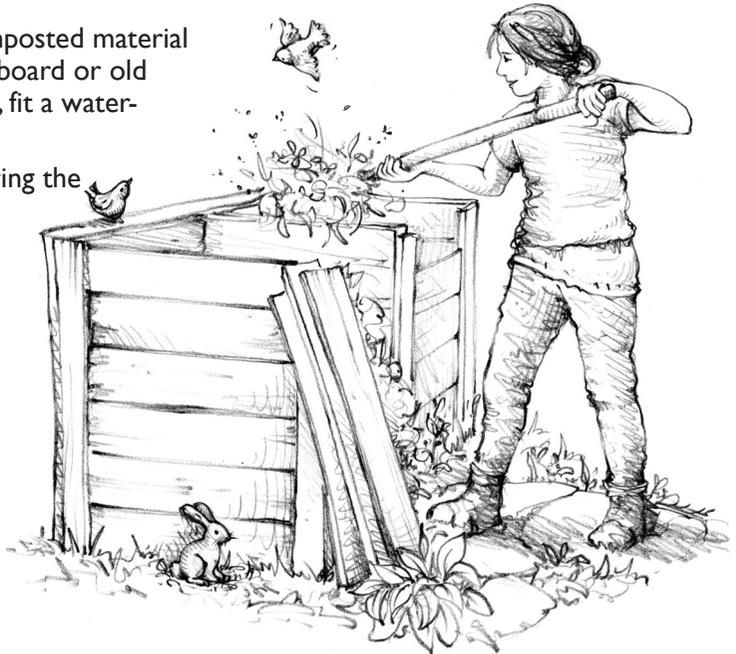
How to use a New Zealand Box:

Make 2 x 1 metre² boxes. Fill one during the first year and, at the beginning of the second year, turn this half-rotted material into the second, empty bay. Turning the compostables introduces air, makes the material hotter and speeds up the composting process.

Cover this partly composted material with bubble film, cardboard or old carpet and, if possible, fit a water-tight lid.

Fill the empty bay during the second year.

At the beginning of the third year, remove and use the finished, two year old compost, turn the one year old material into the emptied bay and continue to add garden waste as before.



During a hot, dry summer, the material may dry out so the composting process will stop. Either cover the bin to keep moisture in and increase the temperature in the bin or pour buckets of water into the bin to keep it moist.

How to make a New Zealand Box with 2 bays:

1. Drive six 1.5 metre stobs (pointed 7.5cm² square fencing posts) into the ground to outline 2 x 1metre² bays
2. Cut seven 2m x 15cm boards; thirty 1m x 15cm boards; one 2m rail (these vary in width and thickness)
3. Nail or screw the 2m boards to the three back stobs
4. Nail or screw eighteen 1m boards to shorter outer and central pairs of stobs to make an E shape
5. Screw the 2m rail between the tops of the front 3 stobs. This stops them from splaying out as the bins are filled. Unscrew and remove this rail when emptying the bay to avoid banging your head.
6. Insert the other twelve 1m boards inside the stobs to make the fourth side. The compostable material will keep the boards roughly in place, but you might find it easier to attach narrow vertical battens to act as runners for these boards.

If you are concerned about rats, attach rabbit wire to the base of each bay. Also make solid tops for the bays and possibly cover the compost material with wire netting. Rats will only be troublesome if they are in the area already; the compost won't bring them to your garden.

Never have open-slatted sides to your box: this creates dry strips of weedy material and does not introduce air to your bin as is sometimes wrongly claimed.

Keep adding to your New Zealand Box all winter, even if you mostly have kitchen waste. The large volume keeps the material warm and composting through frost and snow.

For more information on home composting or to contact us - www.askorganic.co.uk or 01450 860778

ASK Organic, in partnership with Scottish Borders Council, has a Home Composting Display within Woodside Plant Centre, by Ancrum, Jedburgh.



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For information on Waste and Recycling contact Scottish Borders Council Recycling Team on 0300 100 1800 or www.scotborders.gov.uk/recycling

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