

# Composting

*with Sonya Wallace*

## Ingredients

**Nitrogen** – green, new to death – one pile of fine nitrogen (eg fresh, newly cut lawn clippings), one pile of coarse nitrogen (eg freshly chopped up Queensland Arrowroot stalks)

**Carbon** – old, dry – one pile of fine carbon (eg old sawdust out the chookhouse), one pile of coarse carbon (chopped up old dry banana leaves)

**Activators** – molasses (diluted), kelp (diluted), liquid worm castings (diluted to the colour of weak tea), (mix up in a couple of watering cans and have ready to go on nitrogen layers), sour milk, old compost, herbs (comfrey, yarrow, stinging nettles)

**Rockdust** – to increase the mineralisation of your soil

**Water** – have a hose ready to water in the carbon layers

## The recipe

1. Start on bare, level soil
2. Add some sticks to the base to improve air flow – prunings, cuttings, small branches
3. Nitrogen coarse
4. Carbon coarse
5. Water
6. Nitrogen fine
7. Add activator
8. Carbon fine
9. Water
10. Nitrogen coarse
11. Carbon coarse
12. Water
13. Nitrogen fine
14. Add activator
15. Carbon fine
16. And so on and so on...

- Add a handful of minerals about half way through and again on the top layer of nitrogen.
- Keep mixing and matching the layers
- Alternative nitrogen with a carbon layer
- Add the activators to every second nitrogen layers
- Add water to the carbon layers to keep dust to a minimum

## Tips on successful composting

- Keep going until the bin is **completely full**, do this all in one hit.
- Finish with a carbon layer – this will keep smells and flying pests to a minimum
- Leave your bin for a few days to get activated – no peeking!
- \*\* note; build each layer out to the sides of the compost bin (don't end up with a small pile in the middle). Make each layer about 8cm deep – except if you are using sawdust (carbon) or lawn clippings (nitrogen if new, carbon if old) then keep those layer thinner to stop them acting as a barrier to air and water.

## Designing your compost area

When you are designing your garden, why not plant useful compost plants – eg herb activators like comfrey or yarrow and bulk biomass plants like Queensland Arrowroot nearby for easy top ups.