

# The Composter

## *Interview with Madame "Compost"*

1) What is the composter for?

The composter is used to make compost which makes a very good fertilizer for plants.

2) How is compost formed?

Compost is formed with the help of bacteria and soil animals (woodlice, earthworms) which decompose organic matter to turn it into mineral matter.

3) What can we put in the composter?

We can put all organic waste except meat and fish - as this may attract animals such as rats, cats - and make the compost smell bad.

4) Can a composter fit on any soil?

Yes, *here* it is placed on a ground made up of earth.

In Africa there are pit composts where the pit is made out of concrete. It is not wise to place composts on sand because there won't be any soil animals to help the biodegradation process.

5) What are the best materials to make a composter?

There aren't any in particular. Composters can be made from recycled plastic or wood (the wood shouldn't be treated).

6) Why are composters bottomless?

To facilitate the arrival of animals from the ground.

7) How long does it take to make 1 kg of compost?

To make 1 kg of compost it takes about 3 months.

8) Does the composter need a cover?

The cover is not mandatory, but it is preferable to put one in order to avoid bad smells and to protect the compost from bad weather.

9) What is the ideal size of a composter?

It mustn't be too high, so you are able to mix it.

Otherwise, it can be adapted to the size of the garden.

10) What is the best time of the year to make compost?

There is no particular season but ideally not on a rainy period. Fall is a great time to compost as you can collect fallen leaves.

11) Is there an ideal location for the composter?

It's best to keep it in the shade and protected from bad weather.

12) Does anything special have to be done for the compost to form?

It must be mixed every 3 to 4 weeks in order to ventilate it, as bacteria needs oxygen to break down organic matter. We must ensure that the compost is moist and that the temperature is neither too low nor too high to allow for biodegradation.

13) What are the animals that transform the compost?

They are earthworms, bacteria, fungus, woodlice....

14) Can we add animals to speed up the compost process?

Yes, animals can be added, however this is not required for an outdoor composter. You should add compost worms for indoor composters.

15) Is there a specific shape for the composter?

No.

16) Does it smell bad?

No, if the different wastes are in a balanced quantity, it shouldn't smell bad. The compost usually smells like vegetation.

17) Does it attract other animals?

If the compost is done well, it shouldn't attract animals.

18) Can it be dangerous?

No!

19) Do indoor composters exist?

Yes, for indoor composters we should add compost worms to the food waste. The result is a compost juice that we can use to water the plants.

*By Lucie and Aboubacr*

*Translated by: Edouard Sanchez*