

Stationary bin: **Co-op Garden Composter**

Size: 80 cm diameter x 80 cm height

Maximum capacity: 0.25 meters³ (9 feet³)

Price: \$75—80

Tester satisfaction: moderate

Features: Solid green plastic bin with twist locking lid. Removable lower door for accessing the bottom of the bin. Bottom open to the ground.

What you can put in it: Food waste (excluding meat, bones, dairy, and fats), leaves, grass clippings, other yard waste (excluding cat or dog waste).

“Yuck” factor: Moderate-to-low. Materials are neatly enclosed and break down with minimal interaction.

Complexity to use: Moderate-to-low. Some knowledge of balancing ingredients and adding water is helpful.

In winter: Breakdown stops, but you can keep adding materials as long as there is room.

Mobility: The bin is light and easy to move. You can easily lift it off the contents to harvest.

Available at: Seasonally at Saskatoon Co-op Home Centres.



Tested by: **Karen**



Karen is a busy professional and mother who always has a dozen projects on the go. She runs a large-scale waste management and composting company, but before this project had little experience of small-scale composting. She is

interested in composting to help the environment and reduce her household's waste, but has a very small amount of time to tend her backyard bin. This makes her a hands-off composter. She appreciates the short, compact shape of the Co-op bin and how little fuss it is to use.

Karen lives in a household of four with a large yard and small, raised garden. Normally, she has a medium amount of food waste, garden scraps, and green grass clippings to compost. However, for several months of the test period, these organic materials were going to her workplace to start a new compost project there, rather than into her home Co-op bin. If all of her organic materials stayed at home, she likely would have needed a second bin to deal with her volume of yard waste.

Results:

Testing period: May 2014—May 2015

Inputs:

- 400 litres of organic waste (65% greens, 33% browns, 3% dirt or finished compost, 0% other)
- Added 20 litres of water
- Aerated 13 times for a total of 2 hours

Outputs:

- No finished compost was harvested during the test period

Recommendations:

The Co-op Garden Composter is a decent no-frills bin for a small household with mainly kitchen scraps to process. It can also function as an inexpensive second bin for households looking for more space. It can handle small amounts of yard waste, but is not big enough to compost large amounts of grass clippings or garden plants on its own.

Unlike most plastic compost bins which require some assembly, this bin comes in one solid piece. This makes it quite difficult to transport with a small vehicle. Its short, wide stature makes it easier to stir than some taller plastic bins, although we still recommend a compost aerator rather than a garden fork. There are no aeration holes in the bin, however the lower door and top lid provide some airflow. Karen reported that the lower door would sometimes pop off when the bin was quite full.

The bin's open-bottom design is not rodent-proof, Karen reported no trouble with mice or other pests.