

# Stationary bin: Earthmaker

**Size:** 80 cm wide x 80 cm long x 120 cm high

**Maximum capacity:** 0.47 meters<sup>3</sup> (16.5 feet<sup>3</sup>)

**Price:** \$260—\$350

**Tester satisfaction:** high

**Features:** Black plastic structure, medium-sized removable lid, three internal chambers, attached stir-stick, large lower door. 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. Fresh materials stay near the top of the bin and can attract fruit flies.

**Complexity to use:** Moderate-to-high. Materials must be transferred periodically from one chamber to the next. 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 in the top chamber. However this is not a lot of space.

**Mobility:** When empty, the bin is relatively light and easy to move. When in use, it is quite heavy. Emptying it completely takes some effort.

**Available at:** Previously online; currently unavailable.



Tested by: **Sharla**



Sharla grew up in a family that has always composted. During the project, Sharla lived in a household of four adults with a small yard and a garden. They used the Earthmaker to process all of their food waste, grass clippings, and garden waste.

Sharla is an attentive composter, and not easily deterred. She did not let any of the small problems with the Earthmaker’s design discourage her.

## Results:

**Testing period:** May 2014—April 2015

### Inputs:

- 773 litres of organic waste (64% greens, 34% browns, 2% dirt or finished compost)
- Added 50 litres of water
- Aerated 9 times for a total of 1 hour 55 minutes

### Outputs:

- 60 litres of finished compost

## Recommendations:

The design of the Earthmaker is meant to replicate a larger 3-bin system, with a chamber for fresh materials, one for partially-decomposed materials, and one for finished compost. It has a sliding door between its first and second chambers, and a stir-stick meant to aerate and move contents.

The bin did not function as smoothly as we hoped. There was often too much material in the first chamber to fit neatly into the second, which made it very hard to replace the sliding door afterward. (Eventually, Sharla stopped using the sliding door and found that worked better.) As well, it is difficult to stir the second chamber using the stir-stick through the small hole provided. The top chamber tended to dry out while the bottom chamber became soggy from added water. In winter, the bottom two chambers froze solid and became inaccessible.

Given these flaws, combined with the relatively high price and difficulty of finding an Earthmaker, we recommend people choose either a less expensive plastic unit or a full 3-bin system instead.

