

Stationary bin: **Garden Gourmet**

Size: 60 cm wide x 60 cm long x 100 cm high

Maximum capacity: 0.31 meters³ (11 feet³)

Price: \$75—\$100

Tester satisfaction: high

Features: Black plastic snap-together parts, aerated sides, large square lid with two smaller doors, two sliding lower panels for accessing the lower half. 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 many retailers and online.



Tested by: **Lisa**



Lisa is a young adult living in rented properties on a tight budget. Over the course of the project, she lived in two different small households. In the first, there were two adults and a very small yard. All that went into the Garden Gourmet were

kitchen scraps and paper products.

The bin made the move across town with no issues. The second house had three adults and a large yard, with trees and a small garden. Grass clippings were left on the lawn; weeds and leaves went in the bin along with food waste.

Lisa is an adventurous composter; she knows what you are supposed to put in the compost bin but enjoys adding more unusual items just to see what happens. Her successful experiments include 1/2 a litre of fish heads, 2 feet of woven rattan, and a dried starfish. Her biggest failure was half a pound of spoiled cheese.

Lisa is moderately attentive to her compost but sometimes neglects the bin for a few weeks when life gets busy.

Results:

Testing period: May 2014—May 2015

Inputs:

- 603 litres of organic waste (48% greens, 32% browns, 17% dirt or finished compost, 2% other)
- Added 58 litres of water
- Aerated 9 times for a total of 38 minutes

Outputs:

- 96 litres of finished compost

Recommendations:

The Garden Gourmet is a good, basic bin that works well for a small household with mainly food waste. By itself, it is not big enough to deal with large amounts of grass clippings or leaves.

Its tall, narrow design is good for small spaces, but does make it difficult to get a garden fork inside. If you want to stir the contents, you really need a compost aerator (pictured) or long stick. In spite of its small size, it can heat up with the right ingredients. Lisa reported temperatures over 60°C for several days after adding a pail of high-nitrogen fruit pulp from a local juice bar.

While there are two smaller, hinged openings in the lid, it is easier to add new materials by taking the whole lid off. Similarly, while there are sliding panels at the bottom for taking out finished compost, Lisa found it worked best to simply tip the bin over and dig the compost out.

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