

Stationary bin: **Green Johanna**

Size: 82 cm diameter x 94 cm height

Maximum capacity: 0.33 meters³ (12 feet³)

Price: \$275—300; \$340—365 with optional “winter jacket”

Tester satisfaction: high

Features: 100% recycled green plastic parts, large round lid, two sliding lower doors for accessing the lower half. Rodent-proof bottom with small holes for drainage and earthworms. Can be purchased with optional “winter jacket” for additional insulation.

What you can put in it: Most food waste (including meat, bones, and dairy but excluding 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: When full the bin is very difficult to move. Contents must be removed through the doors or lid.

Available from: Durable Solutions Inc., Vancouver BC. (Email info@greencone.ca for more details.)



Tested by: **Kinda**



Kinda lives in a household of four with a small yard and garden. Most of what she had to compost is kitchen scraps, with garden waste a close second. Leaves and sticks make up the carbon-rich brown potion of her waste.

At the start of our study, Kinda had little experience with backyard bins. Before volunteering to help with our study, she mostly used trench compost to deal with her family's food waste.

Results:

Testing period: May 2014—May 2015

Inputs:

- 1018 litres of organic waste (58% greens, 39% browns, 2% dirt or finished compost, 1% other)
- Added 15 litres of water
- Aerated 31 times for a total of 2 hours 40 minutes

Outputs:

- Approximately 120 litres of finished compost

Recommendations:

The Green Johanna is a decent but expensive bin that can be a good choice for a medium-sized household with mainly food waste. By itself, it is not big enough to handle large amounts of grass clippings or leaves.

Its design holds moisture better than most bins and rarely needs watering.

As advertised, this bin is rodent-proof. The holes in the plastic bottom are less than 5 mm across, making them too small for mice but large enough for earthworms. This makes it safer to add meat, bones, and dairy—another plus.

Unfortunately, the Green Johanna did not live up to its other major claim that it would remain unfrozen and active throughout the winter. Even with the optional insulating jacket, Kinda reported that her compost froze in late November and did not thaw until April. This is understandable as the bin was designed for milder climates than the Prairies. However without being able to stay warm in the wintertime, it becomes more difficult to justify the hefty price tag.

Assembling the Green Johanna requires a little bit of persistence. While putting it together, Kinda realised some of the screw holes did not line up or were missing. The enclosed bottom can also be a pain when it comes time to harvest the compost, as it means the bin cannot be lifted off the materials. Instead, finished compost must be dug out through the lower door or dumped out of the top and sorted. You could also wait for the contents to completely finish breaking down, but would need to use a second bin in the meantime.