

Stationary bin: Lee Valley Bracket Compost Bin

Size: The test bin was 92 cm wide x 92 cm long x 92 cm high, but it can vary based on what length of planks are used up to a maximum dimension of 122 cm wide x 122 cm long x 92 cm high.

Maximum capacity: The test bin's capacity was 0.31 meters³ (11 feet³). A bin with the maximum dimensions would be 1.37 meters³ (48 feet³).

Price: Without lumber, \$90—100. With lumber, \$125—200

Tester satisfaction: moderate

Features: Main product consists of four metal corner brackets with spaces for five slanted wooden planks. Planks can be cut to fit a household's specifications, but should not exceed 122 cm (48"). Planks can be screwed into the brackets, but some should be left loose for easy access. Bottom is 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. Materials are mostly enclosed and break down with a small amount of 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 somewhat difficult to move once the planks are screwed in, but can be completely dissembled without too much effort.

Available at: Lee Valley Tools Ltd.

Tested by: **Matthew**



Matthew lives in a household of five with a large yard and various shrubs, trees and perennials. They have a lot of plant materials and grass clippings to compost, as well as some kitchen scraps and dry leaves.

Matthew was completely new to composting at the start of the test period, but willing to give it a try. He is a busy father and professional with very little free time to spend on his compost system. He is a hands-off composter — adding

materials as they are created and letting the pile break down at its own pace. Partly as a result of this, Matthew did not harvest any finished compost from his bin during the test period.



Results:

Testing period: May 2014—May 2015

Inputs:

- 925 litres of organic waste (78% greens, 19% browns, 2% dirt or finished compost, 0% other)
- Added 80 litres of water
- Aerated 18 times for a total of 59 minutes

Outputs:

- No finished compost was harvested during the test period

Recommendations:

The bracket bin has a large, flexible capacity and works well for households with a large amount of yard waste. For a similar price to several of the plastic bins tested by this study, the bracket bin provides far more capacity and its large opening is easier to stir with a garden fork.

Aesthetically-minded gardeners may also prefer this bin rather than a plastic bin because of its attractive, natural appearance. However it does require a larger space than a typical plastic bin.

The slant of the slats prevents materials from falling out of the sides. The large spaces also allow a lot of air to get into the pile, improving aeration. However this also allows the compost to dry out quite quickly, which does mean regular watering is necessary for fast results. If speed is not an issue, as it was not for Matthew's household, materials can simply be piled up for a few years without worrying about moisture or stirring.

The open top of the bin of the bin makes it very convenient to add materials, but could allow the bin to fill up with snow in winter. An improvised lid or covering would prevent this.