

Stationary bin: **Lee Valley Wire Compost Bin**

Size: 91 cm wide x 91 cm long x 76 cm high

Maximum capacity: 0.62 meters³ (22 feet³)

Price: \$35—50

Tester satisfaction: moderate

Features: Four movable sides made of 1/8" coated steel wire with large spaces. 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 enclosed but can spill out and be untidy. Open design may attract mice.

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: Lee Valley Tools Ltd.



Tested by: **Megan**



Megan lives in a household of four with a small yard and a medium-sized garden. She has several years of experience with composting and appreciates making a valuable soil additive to improve her garden soil.

Throughout the year, Megan's household has a large amount of yard waste to compost, including garden

plants, grass clippings and tree leaves. They also produce quite a bit of food scraps from their active kitchen.

Megan does not have a lot of free time to spend puttering with her compost. Before the test period, her household composted in a heap, which was left to break down largely on its own.

Results:

Testing period: May 2014—May 2015

Inputs:

- 2632 litres of organic waste (64% greens, 29% browns, 5% dirt or finished compost, 2% other)
- Added 250 litres of water
- Aerated 12 times for a total of 1 hour 45 minutes

Outputs:

- 180 litres of finished compost

Recommendations:

While this wire compost bin's low price tag and large capacity made it initially seem attractive, we did not find it to be an effective bin for producing compost.

The wire sides did not provide enough insulation to keep the materials from drying out, which meant breakdown was very slow. To fix this would have required near-daily watering, which was impractical for the amount of time and attention Megan had to spare. The spaces in the wire sides were several inches wide, which also allowed some material to fall through the gaps. The wire sides and open bottom do not keep out rodents, and Megan reported seeing at least one mouse during the year. Finally, to avoid damaging the wires, Megan had to take extra care when turning the contents and had difficulty digging into the corners.

While the wire bin did not actively hinder the composting process, its results were not significantly better than simply using an open compost heap.

The wire bin could be useful for storing leaves or other coarse organic material.