

# Stationary bin: **Soilsaver**

**Size:** 71 cm wide x 71 cm long x 81 cm high

**Maximum capacity:** 0.40 meters<sup>3</sup> (14 feet<sup>3</sup>)

**Price:** \$75—\$100

**Tester satisfaction:** low

**Features:** Four black plastic sides connected by nuts and bolts, large square lid with locking handles, 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.



## **Results:**

**Testing period:** May 2014—May 2015

### **Inputs:**

- 488 litres of organic waste (51% greens, 19% browns, 30% dirt or finished compost, 0% other)
- Added 90 litres of water
- Aerated 5 times for a total of 45 minutes

### **Outputs:**

- No finished compost was harvested during the test period

### **Recommendations:**

The Soilsaver is a relatively inexpensive, basic plastic bin that can work well for small households with mainly food waste. As Tina realised during the test period, it is not big enough to handle large amounts of yard waste. Households with a lot of garden waste, tree leaves, or grass clippings will need a larger system or additional bins.

While shorter and wider than some black plastic bins, the Soilsaver is still an awkward shape for trying to stir the contents with a garden fork. To mix the compost effectively, one would need a compost aerator or to physically move the bin off the pile and refill it. It would also be possible to vertically insert a length of PVC pipe with holes drilled along the sides to provide passive aeration.

There are no small openings in the top so the entire lid must be lifted off when adding materials. The bin's open-bottom design is not rodent proof, but Tina reported no trouble with mice over the testing period.

Tested by: **Tina**

Tina lives in a household of four people. They have a large yard that produces plenty of grass clippings and garden waste but few leaves or other brown materials to balance their bin.

Tina's interest in composting is practical. She is an avid gardener and was hoping to create finished compost quickly. The bin's contents did not break down as rapidly as she had hoped, and she quickly realised it did not have the capacity to handle all her inputs. This understandably led to a lot of frustration, and contributed to Tina not using the bin through the colder months.

The Soilsaver was assigned to Tina through our research project but it was not a good match for her household's needs. As hands-off composters with a large amount of food waste, grass clipping and garden plants, a larger capacity bin and/or trench composting may have been more appropriate. A larger capacity bin would have had room to process more materials, and trench composting could have dealt with their excess greens while directly enriching their garden soil.