



Bokashi bin how-to guide

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Haere mai Welcome

What is Bokashi?

Bokashi is a system that originated in Japan for 'pickling' or fermenting food scraps. It requires a small bin and a sawdust mix with special micro-organisms added that work like a yogurt starter.

When the sawdust mix and food scraps are combined in a sealed bucket, the food waste ferments and becomes a nutrient-rich 'pre-compost' product. This product can then be dug into your garden where it turns into compost.

Because the Bokashi system is fully sealed, and the pre-compost product is buried in the ground, there is little chance of smells or attracting rodents and pests.

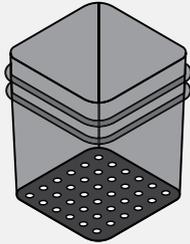
You can add almost any food waste into a Bokashi system, so it's great for reducing your household waste being sent to landfill. It can also save you money on rubbish bag costs.

How to set up your Bokashi bin

You have just been supplied with two separate Zing Bokashi 15L bucket systems. While one is full and fermenting, you can start filling the other one. These two systems include:



2 x outer buckets
to contain the food scraps



2 x inner buckets
with drainage holes



2 x lids
which seal tightly to keep oxygen out of the bucket



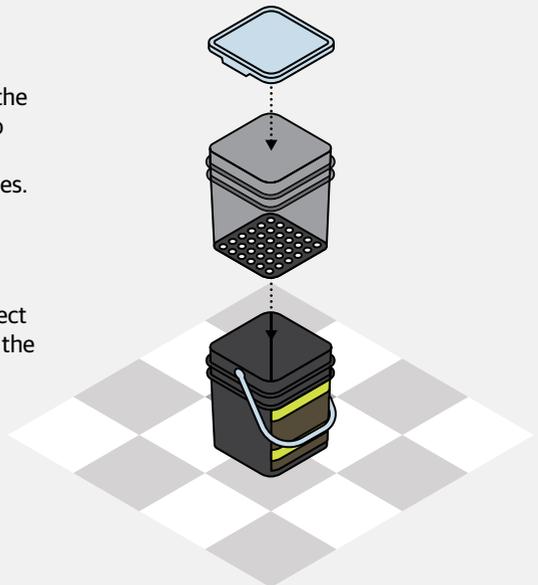
2 x bags of Bokashi "Zing"
contains molasses and sawdust and is sprinkled on the food scraps

Assembly

Simply put the bucket with holes inside the bucket without holes, and fit the lid onto the top bucket. To take the lid off, press down on the circle and pull up on the sides.

Installation

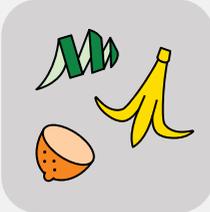
Find a nice sheltered spot away from direct sunlight. This could be in a shady part of the garden, porch, shed, laundry or kitchen.



What can go in your Bokashi bin



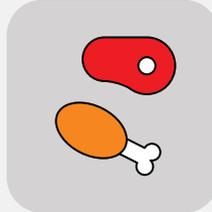
One of the best things about the Bokashi system is they can process a wide range of foods, including:



Chopped fruit and veggie scraps



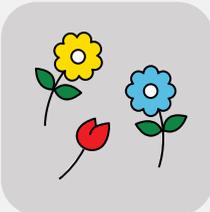
Leftover meals



Cooked and raw meat scraps



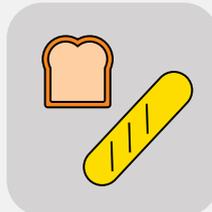
Fish scraps, bones and shellfish



Indoor cut flowers



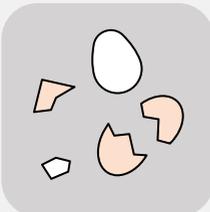
Coffee grounds and tea leaves



Breads and baking products



Nuts and cereals



Eggs and eggshells



Dairy products

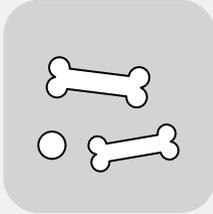


Pasta and rice

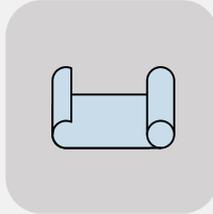
What can't go in your Bokashi bin



However, there are some things you should avoid putting in:



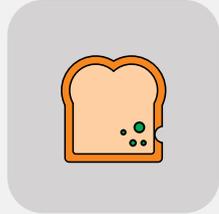
Large meat bones



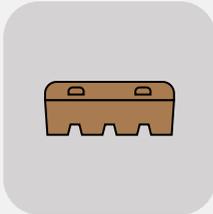
Paper and plastic wrap
even if labelled
as 'compostable'



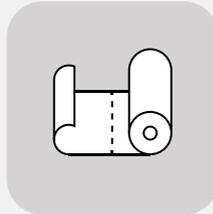
Liquids
eg milk, orange
juice and oil



Mouldy food



Cardboard



Paper towels



Garden waste



Plastic bags
labelled as
'compostable'



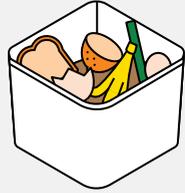
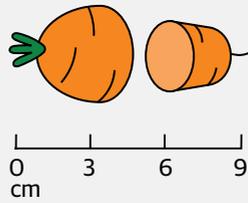
Rubbish



Pet waste

Preparing the food

To help the "pickling" process along, cut everything up into 1-3 cm pieces. It is a good idea to have a container with a lid to collect your food scraps. For convenience, keep this somewhere handy to where you prepare food, like on the bench or under the sink.



Starting the fermentation process



1. Sprinkle a layer of the Bokashi Zing on the bottom of the top Bokashi bucket.



2. Drain any liquid from the collected food.

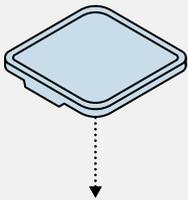


3. Add a layer to your bin (about 6cm) and squash it down to push all the air out of the food.

←..... Potato masher works well



4. Sprinkle about 1-2tbsp of Bokashi Zing to the surface of the food scraps.



5. Replace the lid tightly after each use.



6. Once you've collected more food waste, you can add it to the next layer on top of this, and continue to repeat the process. Toss, squash and sprinkle!



7. Aim to only add food once a day to avoid too much air getting in, as oxygen interferes with the fermentation process.



8. When the weather is warmer, or if you add meat, fish or cheese, sprinkle an extra 2tbsp of the Bokashi Zing to ensure effective pickling and to avoid rotten smells.

Bokashi 'Pickle'

When the bucket is full, seal the lid tightly and let it sit in a sheltered spot out of direct sunlight for about 10-14 days. During this time, liquid will drain into the bottom bucket, and it is important to pour this off every 2-3 days to stop it getting smelly.

Note: White mould growing on top of the solids and liquids is a good sign, and so is a sweet and sour smell. However, if you notice a strong rotten smell (like bad eggs), maggots or blue or green fungi, this means the fermentation process hasn't been successful. In this instance, simply bury the batch, start the process again and make sure you are adding enough Bokashi Zing.

While this process is underway, you can start filling your second system.

After 10-14 days, the pickling process is complete in your first system. It's important to note that these solids are not actually 'compost' yet. They are a 'pre-compost substance'. The Bokashi Zing has introduced good micro-organisms that will help it break down further into compost without nasty smells or attracting pests.

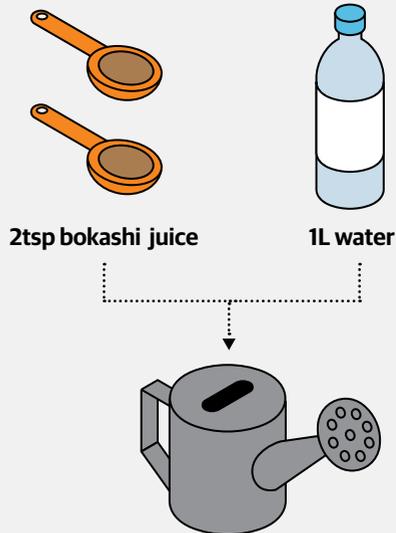
You should bury the contents of your Bokashi bucket away from any tree roots, favourite plants, or veggie garden, as it's very acidic.

Bokashi Juice

Because food scraps are full of moisture, liquid will drain through the system and collect in the bottom bucket. This is called Bokashi juice. It is best practice to drain the juice about every 2-3 days by separating the buckets and emptying the bottom bucket into a container.

The juice contains nutrients from the food waste and is alive with beneficial microbes, so it can be used as a fantastic liquid fertiliser. Careful though—it is very potent and acidic, so it needs to be diluted 1:100, or about a litre of water for every 2 teaspoons of juice. You can apply the diluted juice to your garden, trees or potted plants.

Bokashi juice can also be poured undiluted down the toilet, sink or shower drain as a natural drain cleaner.



Burying your Bokashi 'pickle'

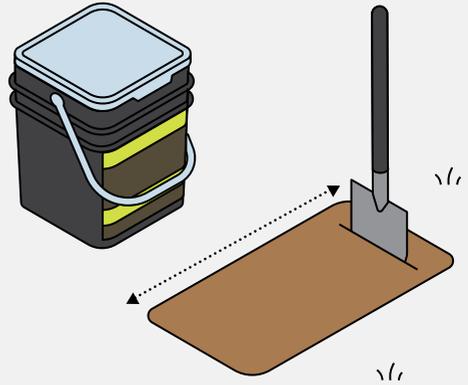
Dig a trench about as deep as the Bokashi bucket and twice as long as a Bokashi bucket laid flat. Distribute the fermented food evenly along the trench, mix in a bit of soil, then cover it with at least 5-8cm of damp soil. The soil needs to be damp so composting can take place.

Harvest time

After about 2 months, your Bokashi 'pickle' will have turned into nutritious compost. You can either plant directly on top of it, or spread it around your garden.

If you don't have space to bury your Bokashi 'pickle', you can add it as a 'greens' layer to your or your neighbour's compost bin.

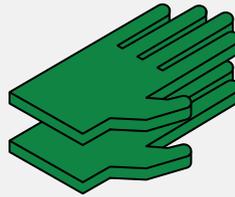
Check out our composting resources for more info on 'greens' and 'browns'. Visit wellington.govt.nz/foodwaste



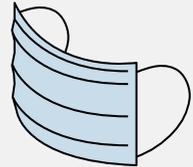
Health and safety

Compost can contain micro-organisms such as Legionella that on rare occasions can cause serious illness. Please wear a face mask and avoid inhaling vapour if the compost is steaming. Always wear gloves when handling compost and wash your hands afterwards.

Look after your Bokashi system, and it will look after you! Following all the guidelines above will help keep your Bokashi system healthy.



gloves



face mask

Contact a Bokashi expert!

We're here to help you understand and get the hang of this process. Please get in touch if you need some help:



food.waste@wcc.govt.nz



Or call **04 499 4444**



For general information about home composting visit **wellington.govt.nz/foodwaste**

Created with guidance and input from:



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**Absolutely Positively
Wellington City Council**

Me Heke Ki Pōneke