

South Seeds Composting Times

Community news for Glasgow's southside



Compost hub opens in Queen's Drive Lane

SOUTH SEEDS has created a community composting hub and is encouraging local residents to bring along their green household waste to its Queen's Drive Lane garden.

The three specially built bins will turn vegetable peelings, tea bags, coffee grounds and other green waste into nutritious plant food, and locally retain a valuable resource.

The garden and its friendly volunteers are part of a drive to build on

the area's sense of community, and provide a place where people can make new friends while enjoying some chat and activity in the outdoors – plus the garden's delicious produce.

South Seeds hopes to encourage residents to discover the benefits of composting as part of a healthier lifestyle which also creates new connections. So, for hints and tips on getting started, and much more besides, welcome to your **Composting Times**.



It's not just about going greener

Wanting to make friends and feel a bigger part of a community are among the reasons why southsiders want to compost, a South Seeds survey has revealed. **PAGE 2**

All you need to know to get going

Why not build your own compost bin? It's easy – just follow our step-by-step guide, including a list of materials and tools, and other great tips. **PAGES 4&5**



Residents of Niithsdale Road, Strathbungo, with their back-courtyard bin built by South Seeds, and some of their lovely compost



The view from the southside

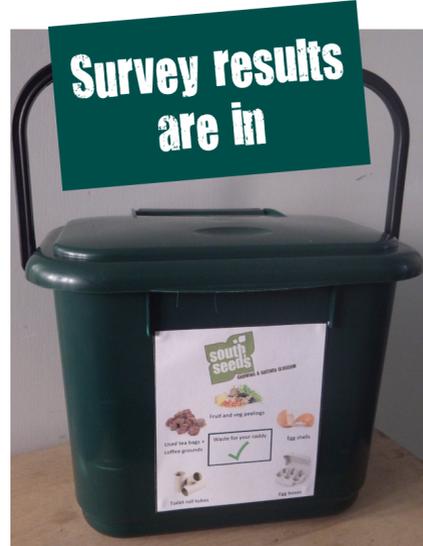
SOUTH SEEDS surveyed southside residents to find out what they knew about composting and if they wanted to get more involved. Many people told us they would like to collect their non-cooked kitchen waste on a regular basis and contribute to the production of compost.

Residents said they wanted to be part of a movement for environmental good and to make connections with others who felt the same.

In response to this, we have decided to expand the composting facilities at our community garden at Queen's Drive Lane so that more residents can drop off caddies of suitable kitchen waste (see page 4).

A visit to the Queen's Drive Lane community garden is a great chance to check out the vegetables in the raised beds, look out for wildlife and see if you can spot any fruit.

The garden can be accessed from Langside Road, about 50 yards to the north of Queen's Drive. Head down Queen's Drive Lane and the space opens up into a large community garden with raised beds and an area dedicated to fruit trees and bushes.



During the growing season regular volunteer sessions are run at the garden and locals are welcome to join in. Information about the sessions is posted on www.southseeds.org and a notice board at the entrance to the garden.

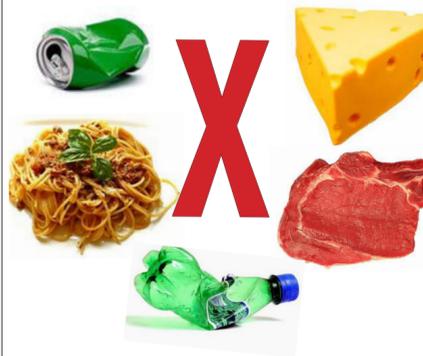
Many residents told us they had no idea what happened to the food waste they collected and put in the grey food waste bins in the back courts. Some told us they would like to start composting to help them feel more positive about today's world.

And lots of residents we have supported have told us that the process of collecting compost and dropping off uncooked kitchen waste has helped them feel more positive, and through composting they have met and spoken with other like-minded neighbours.

Here's what you can compost ...



And here's what you can't compost ...



South Seeds has a handy guide full of tips and information about composting. Drop in to see us on Victoria Road for a copy and a chat, or find it on our website



Welcome

WOULD YOU like the opportunity to get outside, meet people and explore your neighbourhood more? And are you interested in retaining a valuable local resource in the community?

Composting could be the solution to more of life's problems than you think.

Taking your compostable waste to one of the community compost bins that are dotted around Govanhill/Crosshill/Pollokshields, or setting your own one up in your shared back court, means that you'll be locally retaining some of the 2,991 tonnes of compostable material that is generated annually on the southside.

This is waste that won't therefore need to be transported out of the area in lorries, with all the pollution and traffic problems they contribute to, and which will instead become a valuable gardening resource.

Plus, using all that finished compost avoids having to buy in chemical



fertilisers and compost from far away, with all the harmful environmental impacts that go along with those.

The community composting areas are all situated in community gardens so particularly in summer these are great ways to socialise and get to

know neighbours and other people who live nearby. You might be surprised by all the local chat you get to find out.

Take your compost for a walk: when your indoor caddy gets full, it's a great opportunity to get out of your home, take a breather and stretch your legs by walking to your nearest community composting facility. Even a short walk is a great way of clearing your head and boosting your health.

So compost really is a solution to many of life's problems – reducing pollution and traffic, encouraging folk to come together to sprout new friendships, and boosting people's mental and physical health.

Jo Hartga

SOUTH SEEDS WASTE OFFICER

Composting ticks all the boxes

SCOTTISH HOUSEHOLDS are generating an estimated 600,000 tonnes of food and drink waste a year.

Fruit and vegetables make up around 36% of all food thrown away by Scottish households – that's 216,000 tonnes per year (9% of all household waste in Scotland).

Add in other compostable waste such as tea bags, coffee grounds, toilet roll tubes and cardboard egg boxes and the total proportion of household waste that is compostable is around 15% (e.g. 1 in 6 bin bags full).

This is not just a waste of food and money but a waste of all the energy, time, resources, chemicals and water that have gone into growing, harvesting, processing, packaging and preparing that food to be eaten. It would be great if none of this food was wasted. It would also be great if we could do something useful with the food waste that is unavoidable.

If the food waste ends up in landfill it will generate methane, which is a major contributor to climate change – so we need to avoid releasing it into the atmosphere where possible.



Nan McKay Hall's caddies at the ready, and Doon the Lane community garden



Each one of the compost bins that South Seeds has built holds 275kg of food waste when full. If every back court in Govanhill composted their food waste instead of landfilling it, this would save 140 tonnes of climate-changing gas a year – the same amount produced by 40 flights from Scotland to Australia.

New food waste collections for tenement flats in Glasgow are great

Fruit and veg make up around 36% of all food thrown away

for people who don't want to or have the time to get involved in shared and community gardens. But composting turns energy-rich food waste into nutritious plant food that can be used to grow a whole new load of vegetables for you to eat. So green waste doesn't even need to leave the community, cutting all the pollution and traffic generated by lorries transporting it to council sites.

Composting is also a great way to meet people. Drop off your waste at one of the local community gardens and who knows who you'll bump into.

Where you can drop off waste

THREE COMMUNITY hubs in the South Seeds project areas of Govanhill, Crosshill and Pollokshields are opening up their facilities for community use in a bid to boost the number of local composters.

Nan McKay Hall is at the end of St John's Road (G41 5SR). The hall has a compost bin built by Robin Ashton of South Seeds and they are happy for local residents to put their compostable waste in their bin (which is to the left-hand side of the building).

They are also happy for people to pop in for a chat. Some residents were provided with caddies when South Seeds built the bin – but for anyone wishing to transport their own waste to Nan McKay Hall caddies can be bought for a few pounds at a local DIY or gardening shop.

Samaritan House Garden is at 79 Coplaw Street (G42 7JG). The centre opened its first composting facilities in 2015, and they are planning to build three compost bays within the next month. Locals are welcome to take along their compostable waste when Samaritan House's new bays are in place.

As there is a lack of facilities in the north and east of Govanhill this would serve that area well and could act as a catalyst for more composters to develop facilities locally.

Accessed via Langside Road, **Queen's Drive Lane community garden** (G42 8DD) is run by South Seeds and welcomes visitors to drop off their compostable waste – which over time will help to sustain the garden's tasty and nutritious produce.

Council backs compost call

HOME COMPOSTING is a great way for Glasgow residents to cut their waste and help the environment, says Glasgow City Council.

Scott Armstrong, the local authority's recycling manager, told **Composting Times**: "We would encourage any home owner or community group with the space and time to accommodate and manage a home composter to do so. "Composting is a useful way for residents to cut their waste and help the environment. It produces a nutrient-rich plant food which can benefit a home or community garden, or allotment."

Certain foods, such as meat and bones, are not suitable for home composting, so the best way to recycle this type of waste is the council's food-waste collection service. The

contents from the grey food-waste bins for flats is taken to the Scottish Water Horizons biogas plant in Cumbernauld. And there are other uses for organic waste collected by the council.

Waste from brown bins (for non-flatted properties, this is garden and food waste) goes to G&P Plantscape in Blantyre for composting in a temperature-controlled, enclosed environment, while green waste from parks goes to Levensat in South Lanarkshire, where it is composted in long rows in the open air. The council also uses tree clippings as mulch.

'Composting cuts waste and helps the environment'

Build your own compost bin with our step-by-step guide

Once you have all the materials, building your own bin should take less than 4 hours

Why use a pallet bin rather than a black plastic one?

They're inexpensive, using materials you can find on the street or from local businesses. Pallets will often just be going to waste so you can help to avoid sending wood waste to landfill by using it to build a compost bin. Plus, a pallet bin allows air to flow better, supplying oxygen to the micro-organisms that decompose the food waste which enables them to convert it into compost more quickly

You will need:

- 4 wooden pallets (ideally 1200mm x 800mm) ● 13 boards of wood (19mm x 150mm x 1.6m) ● 3 batons (25mm x 50mm x 4.8m) ● Treated plywood (1,500mm x 1,000mm x 9mm) ● Chicken wire (5m roll) ● Staple gun and staples ● Wire cutters ● Saw ● Power screwdriver ● Hammer ● Screws (4", 1 1/4" and 1/2") ● 6 rustproof outdoor hinges ● Measuring tape, pencil and work gloves

South Seeds has also made a film to help you build your own bin. Just go to YouTube and search for 'South Seeds compost'



Step 6

The lid

Use the 9mm sheet of plywood for the lid. Screw the 3 hinges to the lid evenly spaced, with 1/2" screws, then screw the hinges on to the back of the bin at the top. The lid will stop pests getting inside the bin, and keep in heat and moisture which are needed for the composting process. And that's you ready to go. Happy composting



Step 1

Pallet assembly

Position your four pallets on a flat surface (ideally where the bin will get maximum heat from the sun) and as flush with each other as possible. Make sure the two side pallets



overhang a bit at the front where the door will eventually go. If you can't get pallets which are all the same size you can cut bigger pallets down to line up with the smaller ones. Screw the pallets together with the 4" screws



Step 2

The lining

Next, line the inside of the bin with chicken wire. This acts as a deterrent to pests such as rats and foxes. Staple the chicken wire to the pallets, ensuring that the pallets are completely covered and overlap the wire so there are no gaps. Use tin snips to trim the wire to size. Wear gloves to protect your hands when handling the wire



Step 3

The front door

We've designed the bins so that the whole front opens out. This makes it easier to turn the compost or to access it when it's ready to use. Measure the distance at the front between the two side pallets and cut six of the wooden boards to this size. Screw one of boards along the front of the base pallet for the front door to attach to. Screw the other five boards to the three batons, with two at each side and one in the middle. You may have to overlap the top board on to the lower one if it's sitting too high. Screw the hinges evenly spaced along the board that is attached to the base pallet, then put the door in position and screw the hinges on to the door



Step 4

Top boards

Measure and cut four more boards and screw them to the tops of the side and rear pallets to create a flat, even surface for the lid to sit on



Bay divider

We divide the inside of the bin into two separate bays, so that waste in one bay has time to break down into compost while the other is being filled with fresh waste. Place two boards the height of the bin inside in the middle at the front and back. These are to support a third board which is screwed on top to fit the depth of the compost bin from front to back. Staple a piece of chicken wire between the supporting boards to separate the two bays



Step 5

ANNE RUSSELL is a volunteer at Queen's Drive Lane community garden. She had never composted before getting involved at Queen's Drive Lane



Anne

but now she thinks that everyone should have a compost bin in their shared back yard, or use the ones in community spaces nearby.

The community garden is great as it also deters dumping and mistreatment of the space when people see that it's looked after and cared about.

Anne advises that people familiarise themselves with what can and can't be composted so that this doesn't cause problems at a later date. Get a lidded caddy for compostable waste, keep it in your kitchen and empty it regularly to avoid smells, she adds.

"The best way to dispose of suitable food waste is to use a shared compost bin or, even better, have your own compost bin," says Anne. "Want to feel good about doing your part to save the earth's resources? Start using Queen's Drive Lane's shared compost bins."

Southside residents are leading the way

We speak to some of the locals taking action to make their area greener, cleaner and more sociable

Denise & Louis



LOUIS AND DENISE live in a tenement in Strathbungo and both work full time. They have a compost bin in their back yard built in partnership with South Seeds in November 2014. Before the bin was installed Louis talked to his neighbours and found out they were keen to get composting, so they could recycle a wider range of waste. The shared back court was underutilised so siting the bin there gave everyone a reason to get out more, and have more of a chance to socialise.

WHAT WERE THE CHALLENGES?

Making time to regularly turn the compost, knowing what you can and can't compost or what degrades well and what doesn't in a standard bin e.g. compostable cups only tend to degrade well in hot compost bins (in which the waste heats up to 80°C).

WHAT WERE YOUR SUCCESSES?

The main good result was getting the mature compost and using it in our raised bed and pots. We found it takes about a year to fill one side of the bin with at least three flats in the close using it. When we turned the compost more regularly we noticed it matures more quickly. Another success is how well the neighbours took to using the bin after chatting to them all about it. Once it had been

built, we gave them all a copy of the South Seeds composting manual and a caddy for their compostable waste in. At least three flats are still using the compost bin even though we have the food-waste bin from the council.

ANY ADVICE?

Talk to your neighbours first – if none of them wants a compost bin then you won't fill it up and therefore get finished compost very quickly. Pick a sunny spot in your back court as this helps the waste to degrade faster, be committed to turn the compost as much as possible. Consider whether you have (or could have) a use for the finished compost e.g. raised beds, flower or herb pots, or a friend or relative who could use it if you can't. If you use compostable liner bags, split the bag before putting the waste in your compost bin as the bag won't degrade as easily as the contents.

WHY SHOULD PEOPLE COMPOST RATHER THAN USE A FOOD WASTE BIN?

The vast majority of your food waste is compostable and it's nice to be able to use your own waste to produce a medium for growing your own food in.

Around 15% of household waste is compostable

Ian, Conor, Rosie & Yazmin



YAZMIN MANN leads other volunteers at Sooside Bloomers (a group which tends the Samaritan House community garden in Coplaw Street).

They have a mesh composting bin for leaves but are planning a three-bay compost system for kitchen waste, and a two-bay bin for material such as branches and woody waste that takes longer to break down.

The bays will be accessible for people in wheelchairs, and the bins will feature pictorial signs so people know what goes where.

The bloomers are very keen for local residents to bring along their waste so that they don't have to buy in as much compost for the garden, which is accessible 24/7 for any locals (not just housing association tenants). Opened in 2015 by Nicola

"We love growing, and use gardening to create a sense of fulfilment for us all"

Sturgeon, the space is accessible for people with disabilities and they don't take a 'one size fits all approach' to gardening. There are around 14 regular volunteers who come to help in the garden in all weathers, and 2016 was their first full growing season.

"Sooside Bloomers came together as a group of disabled people who love growing and use gardening as a kind of therapy that creates a sense of fulfilment for us all," said Yazmin. "Relationships, and the social and therapeutic benefits of the garden, are as important to us as the horticulture."



We debunk some of the usual excuses for not taking a little local action

1 COMPOST BINS CAUSE VERMIN PROBLEMS

Rats and mice are always on the lookout for sources of high-energy food and cosy places to sleep. Compostable waste is not usually of much interest to rodents unless it contains tasty morsels of things such as meat, fish, dairy products and bread. This is one of the reasons why it's not recommended to put these in your compost bin. Compost bins can also be very warm in the middle, due to the frenzied activity of composting

Common compost

micro-organisms. However, by lining your bin with small-gauge chicken wire and keeping the lid shut you should make it impossible for rats to get into the bin and they are unlikely to bother persevering.

Turning your compost regularly will also make it an unattractive potential home for rodents – and is recommended practice to help the compost mature properly. Without an easy source of food and shelter, rats and mice have no reason to be hanging around your compost bin.

2 COMPOST BINS SMELL

Compostable waste should not smell unless it has little or no air flow around it. Without air (and therefore oxygen), the usual micro-organisms that break down the waste into compost cannot survive, so different

types of micro-organisms move in and start work. These can survive without oxygen but they produce methane (a smelly gas) when they break down waste.

Make sure you empty compostable waste from your kitchen regularly (at least once a week) as keeping it in a container with a lid for too long will restrict air flow. Also make sure that your compost bin has gaps for air to circulate through it and that you keep the lid closed to keep out the rain – too much water in the compost will also reduce its oxygen content and effectively suffocate the good composting micro-

organisms. Turning your compost regularly can also help to ensure that it gets an even exposure to air and oxygen.



complaints



3 IF WE HAVE A GREY COUNCIL FOOD WASTE BIN, THERE'S NO POINT IN COMPOSTING

Putting your compostable waste in a back-court compost bin or one of the community garden compost bins nearby avoids the need to transport it by lorry to North Lanarkshire where the grey bin waste is processed, therefore avoiding contributing to air pollution and local traffic issues.

It also means that you and other residents who use the compost bins will need to buy in less compost from a shop and keeps all the nutrients from waste that was generated in our local community for growing more food in our local community.

Taking your compostable waste to a community garden bin is also a great opportunity to get some fresh air, stretch your legs and catch up with your neighbours.

Some food waste shouldn't be composted e.g. meat, bones, dairy and bread, so these types of waste should be put in the grey food waste bin rather than sending it to landfill. The waste from the grey bin is processed to release gas which can be used to drive a turbine to generate electricity, which is much better than landfill even if it isn't quite as good as composting.

4 COMPOST ATTRACTS FLIES

Flies are attracted to fresh food waste as it presents a tasty snack and potential place to lay their eggs. However, you can minimise how attractive food waste is to flies by emptying your kitchen scraps container into the outside compost bin regularly as they will

prefer the warmth of your home. Turning your compost bin regularly will also help the waste to break down quicker so that it is in its fresh state for a shorter time – food waste provides less nutrients for the flies the more it degrades so they are only interested in fresh food waste.

5 COMPOST BINS NEED A LOT OF WORK

Having a compost bin does not need to be onerous. A little effort on a regular basis (half an hour every few weeks or more often) to turn the compost will deter pests and ensure micro-organisms that are concentrated in the middle get a good air supply and can access all parts of the compost pile. This will make the composting waste break down more quickly.



So you've cut down on what your household sends to landfill and are producing lovely fertile homemade compost. Here are just some of the options for using it

What to do with your compost

WHY NOT VOLUNTEER WITH QUEEN'S DRIVE LANE COMMUNITY GARDEN?

Help to grow vegetables that you can have a share in. Just come along to the volunteer sessions, which begin at the start of the growing season. Check our website or pop into the shop for more information and a chat.

GET SOME GROWING CONTAINERS FOR YOUR WINDOW SILLS

You can do this in a variety of ways other than buying them from a shop.

1. Make your own with pallets, salvage old plastic crates from the street, buy some from Glasgow Wood Recycling or garden shops.
2. Carefully secure the containers to your window ledge. Screw hooks into the ledge and run a piece of wire of plastic twine around the container, then tie it to the hooks.
3. Ensure there are drainage holes at the bottom of the container, and line it with pebbles or broken crockery. This helps to retain the right amount of moisture.
4. Fill the container with compost (or a compost/soil mix). Plant your seeds as per the instructions on the packet.
5. Over winter you may want to bring containers inside on a shelf next to the window or cover the soil in your containers with mulch – a layer of bits of bark, sawdust mixed with torn up paper, or straw and farmyard manure. This reduces evaporation, maintains soil temperature and controls weeds. The mulch also provides materials for the soil micro-organisms to break down into nutrients for next year's growing season.

USE YOUR SHARED BACK COURT TO GROW VEGETABLES

How to do this:

1. Talk to as many of the neighbours in your close as you can before you start to gauge their interest in helping you and to allow them to have input into decisions about what is planted and where. If your neighbours feel that they have been consulted during the planning of the garden from an early



Happy southside community composters with their South Seeds bin



You can't top homegrown produce

Each one of the compost bins that South Seeds has built holds 275kg of food waste when full

stage they will be much more likely to feel happy about having the garden there even if they don't want to/don't have the time to be actively involved in growing things.

2. Raised beds are an easy way to start growing vegetables or flowers as they can be simply and cheaply built and then filled with compost rather than having to prepare the

What to grow on a tenement window sill

Growing plants on your window sills means you have easy access to fresh food to add to your meals.

It's good to grow plants that are fast growing, cut and come again, and need little space and depth for roots etc. Some things you might find work really well are ● herbs ● tomatoes ● flowers ● salad leaves ● bee-attracting plants

soil which may not be in good condition. You can buy raised beds from Glasgow Wood Recycling or get some weatherproofed timber that you assemble yourself.

3. Fill the raised bed to about four inches from the top with compost then plant your seedlings or seeds directly.
4. Over winter keep the soil in the beds covered with mulch to provide material for the soil micro-organisms to break down into nutrients for next year's growing.

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