

# FACT SHEET USING BOKASHI



The Bokashi bucket is the perfect alternative for people who want to compost but don't have much space. The Bokashi composting system works on the principle of anaerobic composting (without oxygen) in an airtight container, thereby eliminating odours and making it suitable for indoors. Organic waste is added to the bucket, followed by Bokashi mix - organic material with micro-organisms - which breaks the waste down into wonderful Bokashi juice for your garden!



## HOW TO COMPOST USING BOKASHI BUCKETS

1. Place your Bokashi bucket somewhere handy such as the kitchen bench or under the sink.
2. Place the drain plate in the bottom of the bucket. This plate allows excess liquid from the bucket to drain out.
3. Place a layer of organic waste (3-4cm thick) on top of the drain plate before adding Bokashi mix (liquid or grain) as per the instructions on the packet.
4. As food waste is produced, add it to your bucket.
5. At the end of each day press down on the mixture to remove air pockets using a compactor, mashing utensil or similar, add some more Bokashi mix and replace the lid making sure it is firmly secured.

*TIP: When using high protein foods such as meat, fish, eggs and cheese, add a little extra Bokashi mix.*

6. Once or twice a week, drain the liquid from the bottom of the bucket.
7. Repeat steps 4-6 until your bucket is full.
8. Once full, ensure the lid is firmly secured and set your bucket aside for 10-15 days. Drain the liquid from the bottom every other day.
9. After 10-15 days your bucket is ready to be emptied. Dig a small hole or trench in a garden bed or large planter, empty the contents of the bucket and bury. See over for tips on using your compost.
10. Rinse the bucket with water only and repeat the whole process.
11. In 2 to 4 weeks, the waste you have buried will be mostly broken down and rich with nutrients, microbes and enzymes. It's a terrific soil conditioner and will help your garden to thrive.

## USING YOUR LIQUID

The amount and colour of Bokashi liquid produced will vary depending on the types of food used. Generally, vegetables produce the most liquid however, don't be concerned if little or no liquid is produced.

*TIP: Bokashi liquid must be used within 24 hours once drained from the bucket.*

### IN THE GARDEN:

Bokashi liquid makes a terrific fertiliser as it is full of nutrients and alive with beneficial micro-organisms. To use as a soil conditioner in the garden, dilute with water (approximately 1:100 ratio) and water onto your lawn, garden beds or pot plants – do NOT apply directly to plant foliage.

### AROUND THE HOUSE:

Pour undiluted Bokashi liquid directly into your drains, toilets and septic systems to eliminate algae build-up and control unpleasant odours. It will also assist in cleaning our waterways by competing with harmful bacteria.

## USING YOUR COMPOST

There are a number of ways you can use the contents of your Bokashi bucket in the garden. The compost can be buried directly into the garden around shrubs and trees or emptied into a trench that can later be used as a garden bed. Simply cover it over with soil and/or mulch (at least 15cm thick) and in 2-4 weeks it will have broken down. When the bucket is full again, simply repeat the process in a different part of the garden.

The contents of your Bokashi bucket can also be added to your worm farm however, ensure you only give small amounts to begin with so your worms can get used to it. Alternatively, you can put the contents directly into an outdoor compost bin ensuring a layer of soil or mulch is placed on top to keep it airtight.

*TIP: Bokashi compost is acidic when first buried but neutralises after 7-10 days, so ensure plant roots do not come in contact with the compost during the early stages of break down.*

## NO GARDEN OF YOUR OWN?

- » Ask your building/strata manager if you can use your compost to fertilise communal garden areas
- » Donate your compost to a friend's garden or to a local community garden
- » Start a balcony garden with large planters that can take your Bokashi contents

## OTHER IMPORTANT INFO:

- » A well fermented Bokashi bucket should smell similar to pickles or cider vinegar.
- » Occasionally you might see a white cotton-like fungal growth on the surface of your Bokashi mixture. This is normal and indicates that the fermentation process is working well.
- » The waste mixture will not break down in the bucket but only ferment. Physical breakdown happens in the soil and occurs more rapidly than other composting methods as it has already been fermented.
- » You can leave your Bokashi bucket when you go away on holidays, just make sure the lid is firmly secured after adding a layer of Bokashi mix and emptying the drain bucket.
  - » Ensure pets do NOT eat the fermented waste. Although there is nothing harmful in the Bokashi mix, partially decomposed food waste can be harmful to some pets.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

The presence of black or blue fungi and a strong rancid/rotten smell indicates an 'unhealthy' Bokashi bucket and may be caused by a number of factors including:

- » Not adding enough Bokashi mix
- » Not ensuring the bucket lid is firmly secured
- » Not pressing out the air pockets properly
- » Not draining the liquid from the bucket
- » Prolonged or direct exposure to sunlight and/or heat

### SOLUTION:

Find a spot in the garden away from plants and dig a hole. Place the contents of the bucket in the hole along with some Bokashi mix and incorporate in some soil. Add more Bokashi mix and cover with soil. Wash out the bucket and start again.

