Internet Resources

The MDEQ website at www.deq.state.ms.us/solidwaste
www.composting101.com
www.compostingcouncil.org
www.epa.gov/compost

For more information and resources, search the internet for "home or backyard composting".

Build Your Own Backyard Compost Bin

From Garbage to Garden

It's Compost Time!

In an effort to encourage backyard composting in the state, the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality would like to provide the following instructions for constructing your own composting bin. You can build one out of wooden pallets, a garbage can, wire mesh, and various other materials. Some people keep two compost bins on-site – one for finished compost and one that's in the process of composting. Here's how to build three types of home composting bins:

Wooden Pallet Bin

Materials Needed: 4 to 6 wooden pallets, heavy wire, heavy-duty plastic ties or nails, pliers, snips, and work gloves;

Instructions: Use 4 pallets to form the sides of the bin. To start, stand two pallets on edge to form a right angle. Nail the two pallets together anywhere possible on the corner, usually nailing is best on the pallet's main crosspieces. If nailing isn't possible you can tie them together with wire or plastic ties. Add another pallet standing on edge to form three sides of a square. Brace and nail it together where they meet. Some people leave the fourth side open and use it to deposit material into the compost bin. Others add a fourth pallet and load from the top, or attach the fourth pallet with bolt latches allowing this side to open and close for adding or removing material. You may also want to sharpen the bottom end of the corner pieces of the pallets to act as stakes. You can also use another pallet for a cover or one for a base if desired.

Garbage Bin

Materials Needed: plastic or metal garbage can with cover (32 gallon can recommended), a drill, and 4 to 6 bricks. (Note: Darker cans tend to heat up more quickly in the sun.)

Instructions: Drill or punch holes all over the sides and bottom of the can. Make sure the holes in the sides are numerous and cover the sides of the can. The microbes that actually do the composting need oxygen to do their work. Do not drill too many holes in the bottom. You want the can to drain, but you do not want the compost to dry out. Cover or lid the can to keep animals out of your compost pile. Place the garbage can on bricks or several 2-by-4-inch pieces of lumber to keep the can off the ground and prevent the can from rusting or otherwise degrading. To expedite composting move the bin to the sun, but don't let the compost dry out. If you are using a can with locking handles; you can lock the handles, turn the garbage can on its side, and roll the can around periodically to help stir the compost pile.

Wire Mesh Bin

Materials Needed: 12.5 feet of 36-inch-wide 1-inch mesh (or smaller) galvanized chicken wire, heavy wire or heavy duty plastic ties (for tying), 3 or 4 wooden or metal posts (4 feet tall), heavy-duty wire snips, pliers, hammer, and work gloves.

Instructions: Fold 3 to 4 inches of chicken wire at each end of the cut piece to provide a strong, clean edge that will not poke or snag and will be easy to latch. Form a circle with the wire and set it in place for the compost pile. Cut the heavy wire into lengths for ties. Using pliers, attach the ends of the chicken wire together with the wire ties. You can also use heavy duty plastic ties to attach the ends of the chicken wire together. Space wooden or metal posts around the inside of the chicken wire circle. Holding the posts tightly against the wire, pound them firmly into the ground to provide support.

Manufactured Bin

You can also purchase compost bins from home improvement and garden centers, hardware stores, or from internet sites like: www.composters.com or www.gardeners.com.   Compost bins can be found in a range of materials including plastic, wood, metal, and other materials.