

building a compost heap

You'll need:
timber for corner posts (we used 100mm x 100mm)
and framing (we used 100mm x 50mm),
half rounds for removable fronts (we used 140mm x
50mm), trellis beading, galvanised steel mesh,
nails, staples, string line, tape measure, spirit level,
square edge, hammer, saw, spade, wire cutters



< Step 1

Decide on the type of composting system that will best meet your needs. In this large garden, we opted for a triple-stage bin. It can take three to four months for composting to take place. In that time, the heat at the centre of the pile will approach 60°C, and everything in the bin needs to go through that cooking process to kill any weeds and avoid putrefaction. One bin will be filled with clippings, which will be turned regularly for even aeration and heat distribution. Over the composting period, the other bins will be progressively filled and turned, so there is always a good rotation of material in and out of the system.

Then, using a string line and pegs, map out the dimensions of your composting system. Dig holes for the support posts and bed them in. It helps if the corner posts are the same height as the steel mesh you plan to use.

Step 2 >

Measure out the framing, cut to length and nail onto the vertical supports top and bottom for stability. We also used a length of half-round on the outside edges of the framing for looks, and half-way down the exterior edges for added strength, once the mesh had been added.



- Resene Bling Bling
- Resene Pearl Lusta
- Resene Woodstock

Step 3 >

Secure the leading edge of the wire mesh to one of the front outside supports. Encase each bin in mesh on the sides and back, stapling the wire to the corner posts and framing as you go. The wire will let air into the bins, while still keeping the compost contained.



< Step 4

Measure and cut half rounds. You'll need one length for each vertical face of the bin fronts, and enough to close in the fronts of the bins horizontally from ground level to the top.

These will easily lift out to allow for the turning and removal of compost.



<< Step 5

Nail one length of half round to each front vertical side of the bins, with a few centimetres' overhang on the inside edge.

Cut a length of trellis beading to the same height. Measure back from the half round to slightly more than the cross-section width of a piece of half round and nail the beading to the vertical support.

< Step 6

Drop each of the half rounds into the slots between the facing half rounds and the beading. This closes the front of the bins.