

Garden Waste – Brown Bin

Frequently asked questions

What can go into the brown bin?

Yes	No
Grass clippings	Food waste (including fruit and vegetables)
Hedge trimmings	Plastic bags and bin liners (including biodegradable bags)
Flowers and pot plants	Soil
Leaves	Cardboard
Weeds	Animal waste, including pet litter/bedding
Small twigs and branches (no bigger than 100mm/4" in diameter)	Other household waste, for example, nappies, vacuum cleaner contents, ash, metal, glass, plastic, newspapers, magazines, polystyrene or plastic plant pots

Why can't I put food waste in my brown bin?

In 2011 arrangements for managing fruit and vegetable waste were changed because of the previous outbreak of foot and mouth disease. The outbreak was attributed to inadequately treated food waste being fed back to cattle. This prompted the introduction of regulations governing the processing of waste animal by-products (meat and meat products, dairy, eggs, for example) and other foodstuffs that may have come into contact with this material.

Regulatory agencies locally (Animal Health, Trading Standards) have determined that fruit and vegetable wastes processed within a domestic or commercial kitchen in which animal by-products have also been prepared, could be cross contaminated and as such must now be subject to the same regulatory regime. This means that kitchen waste can no longer be composted along with garden waste in the composting systems we use.

For more information please see [GOV.UK - Guidance for the animal by-product industry](#).

Can I put fallen apples and home grown produce in the brown bin?

If you have a fruit tree or grow your own produce you can place the fruit and vegetables in the brown bin, as they have not been within a domestic kitchen. Be aware that if the bin is too heavy – even if you are able to move it, it may be too heavy for the lifters on the vehicle and will not be emptied.

Why can't I put animal bedding and faeces in my brown bin?

Residents are unable to place animal bedding /faeces in the brown bin, as it can't be recycled at the facility who take our garden waste.

Small amount can be placed in your general bin, upto one bag/sack can be taken to the Household Recycling Centre once a week, if you have larger amounts you will need to arrange a private licensed disposal site or treat in a septic tank

As soiled animal bedding/faeces is classed as industrial waste. The council have no legal obligation to provide a collection and disposal service for industrial waste but if it does choose to it must fully recover its costs in doing so. We do offer an animal waste collection service

Why can't I put biodegradable bags in my brown bin?

No bags can go in the brown bin as they cannot be composted. Although biodegradable bags are available, the bags take too long to decompose, and they are more suited to be used in home composters.

How can I find out when my bin collection dates are?

Please visit our collection dates and missed bins page to search by postcode, or request a new calendar. Brown bins are collected fortnightly except during the winter when they are suspended. Each year we send out a calendar which shows when your bin collections are.

Where do I present my bins for collection?

Please present your bins at the edge of your property, where it meets the pavement by 7am on the day of collection.

What to do with your bins after collection?

We request that the bins are returned to your property after collection as soon as you can. Do not leave your bin on the highway/pavement as this is an offence under the Highways Act 1980 it is an offence to obstruct the highway including pavements.

Why was my bin tagged?

We have three tags

- **Blue tag** – this means that your bin was either compacted or frozen and the contents could not be emptied. The bins are lifted several times and knocked, they can't continue as this will lead to the bin splitting. We suggest that you loosen the waste with a garden fork before your next collection to ensure the bin can be emptied properly.
- **Red tag** – this means that you had the wrong materials/items in the bin. If it's the brown it could be that it contained soil or rubble or any of the No items as listed at the top of the page. If you remove the wrong materials/item then we will collect on the next scheduled collection day.
- **Orange tag** – this means that the bin was unsafe to empty as it could be the lid is raised, too heavy or that the container is damaged. If the problem is corrected then the bin will be emptied on the next scheduled collection day.

I am unable to move my bin out for collection. What can I do?

If you have a physical/medical condition/infirmity/a temporary injury/pregnancy leaving you unable to present your waste for collection, and there are no able bodied occupants at the property (over the age of 16), you can request an assisted collection. Once approved you will receive an assisted collection for all bins, boxes and bags.

My bin has been lost/stolen/damaged. Can I get a replacement?

Yes. Bins are provided initially to new residents free of charge. On the first occasion we will provide a replacement 140 litre bin free of charge to replace lost or stolen containers. There will be a charge for any further replacements. Bins are covered by a ten year guarantee, if your bin is damaged and no longer guaranteed we will replace it with a free 140 litre bin. If your bin is still covered by the guarantee then it will be replaced (like for like) free of charge.

Can I get a larger recycling bin?

Yes, as long as you do not have a 240L bin of any type already. If you are happy to reduce the size of your general waste bin you can either have a larger burgundy bin (for plastic, cardboard and cartons) or a larger brown bin (for garden waste). Concessions only apply to households with 5 or more permanent residents or residents with specific medical conditions. They do not apply to properties with larger gardens, and are not related to a property's council tax band.

Garden waste is not legally defined as household waste, therefore the council does not have a statutory duty to collect it. The provision of the brown bins is to enable recyclable materials to be diverted away from landfill or used as refuse derived fuel. The containers we provide for this are not expected to take all the waste from your garden but to provide sufficient capacity for the average household.

For further details see our larger recycling bin

I have just moved into a house and there is no brown bin at the property.

New residents are entitled to a 140 litre brown recycling bins if you have a garden. To request any containers please fill in the request for a new bin form.

Why was the extra waste at the side of my bin not collected?

It is council policy not to collect excess waste with any of the bins under any circumstances. This is to ensure that all residents receive a fair and equal service, and to safeguard the health and safety of the crews. If you have extra waste or recycling it can be taken to one of the Household Recycling Centres. You could consider Home Composting.

You say the bin is too heavy but I can move it?

If your bin is too heavy the lifting arms on the truck will not be able to lift and empty the bin. The bin would split if it was lifted. Even if you are able to move the bin yourself this does not mean that the vehicle is able to take the weight of the bin.

My bin has not been collected - report a missed bin

If your bin was presented at the edge of your property where it meets the pavement before 7am on collection day and it was missed by the collection crews you can report a missed bin online with our [missed bin](#) form, or contact the Customer Contact Centre 01724 297000.

Only report a missed bin after 4pm unless your adjacent neighbours either side have been emptied. We will check on CCTV and crew reports and then a decision will be made as to whether we will return. If we return for the bin it needs to be accessible by the crews and will be emptied within 3 working days of reporting.

How to I prevent maggots?

[Advice on prevent maggots](#) are available on our website.

Do we sell compost?

We no longer sell compost produced from the brown bin as the waste is collected by the contractor for processing

Where can I get a composter from?

In a bid to encourage more people to recycle their garden waste, the council has teamed up with [Straight plc](#) to offer residents home compost bins. Straight plc offers a variety of different composters, wormeries and water butts to suit all your needs.

How do I compost?

Look at our webpage on how to [home compost](#).