

# GOOD

## DIY Guide: Making Your Own Compost Bin

by Kelsey Barrett  
March 30, 2013

When [I traveled to Taveuni, Fiji to help develop a garden](#) at the Heart of Yoga retreat center, we did everything from scratch, including building a place to compost. We designed the compost area using wildcrafted ‘torch sticks’ as the bones of the bin, and used raffia—a plastic twine and great alternative to communities with limited resources—to secure the torch sticks together.

Whether you're in a city, or have access to natural resources, here's a simple guide to creating your own compost area from a few basic materials:



1. Gather sticks, young tree saplings, or bamboo from a local woodland area for the bones of the bin. If you are in a city thick dowels from a hardware store can supply a sturdy structure.

(When gathering saplings from woodlands, cut in shaded forest area. This supports health of the forest by allowing nutrients to flow to larger trees, and utilizing young trees is a sustainable harvesting technique as they regrow quite quickly. This method of forest management is a traditional practice called 'coppicing'.)

2. Locate a patch of semi-flat soft soil. Mark an even square to the length of desired compost bin, based on the amount of your compost output. Dig out the square 6 - 8" deep.

3. Separate your four thickest wood poles. Cut the bottom end of each wood pole at a diagonal angle, making it sharp and pointed. Stick each pole in one of the four corners of the square. Each pole will be stable and erect.







4. Measure the length of one side of your compost square. Cut the remaining poles 4" longer than the square length. At both North and South (opposite facing) sides of the bin, lie a pole on the ground, edges flush against the vertical poles where meeting. At both East and West (opposite facing) sides of the bin, stack one pole upon the bottom layer of poles, parallel to the ground.





5. At the four corners where pole ends cross, loop raffia or twine around the stick ends and tie into a knot. Cut raffia length as needed.

6. Repeat stacking until compost is 2 - 3' high. As your compost breaks down you'll want to turn the pile, take care that the bin finishes at a comfortable height to turn.

7. If you live in a city, the compost bin can be lined with chicken wire to keep your rodent cousins out of the mix!



