

# STARTING YOUR HOTBIN

This quick start guide should help to get your **HOTBIN** to between 40 - 60°C within 48 hours. There is more detailed information in our extensive FAQ online at [www.hotbincomposting.com](http://www.hotbincomposting.com).

## 1. Assembly and set up checks

There is no assembly required as your **HOTBIN** comes ready to use – Just place it on a flat surface.

Your **HOTBIN** needs aeration. Please open the aeration valve **Fig 3** to its minimum position of 2-5mm open as it will arrive closed shut. Also check nothing is blocking the aeration mesh plate **Fig 9**.

Remember heat will be lost when the lid is open, so unless adding waste, keep it shut at all times. Always check there is no waste on the wall lip, brush it into the **HOTBIN** to prevent it propping the lid open/ajar.

## 2. You need a base layer

This needs to be at least 40cm deep which is above the hatch door panel **Fig 8**.

You may have enough traditional composting material readily available to get going straightaway; if so put it all into the **HOTBIN**, the more the merrier.

You may not have enough traditional composting material; be patient and build up your base layer when material becomes available. The temperature in your **HOTBIN** will build up more slowly until you have enough waste in your base layer.

Remember you can add kitchen peelings to the base layer at anytime.

A good base layer will also have easy to digest material that has been chopped up < 4cm to help the bacteria generate heat more quickly. Items like grass and chicken poop or pellets really help generate heat faster. See the Waste Table.

## 3. Your base layer is ready

You have a base layer that reaches above the hatch door panel **Fig 8**.

Now you can start adding food waste mixed with bulking agent **Fig 14**. Mix in a ratio of 1 part to 10 parts food waste – This equates to 2 handfuls per small caddy of food waste.

## 4. It's cold outside

In winter you may need to give the bacteria a little bit of help **Fig 13**.

If it is < 5°C outside use the Winter Kick-Start Heater. It works in the **HOTBIN** due to its insulated properties and keeps the bacteria cosy for 1-3 hours allowing them to start generating their own heat. Simply nestle the hot water bottle into the top of the base layer and place fresh waste over the top, close the lid and wait 48 hours.

## 5. The temperature

In the early days you should only rely on the temperature from the long stemmed thermometer **Fig 11** inside the **HOTBIN**.

Although the thermometer in the **HOTBIN** lid is very convenient, it does only measure the temperature of the gasses leaving the **HOTBIN**. So the **HOTBIN** needs to be around 50% full and running between 40-60°C before the lid thermometer **Fig 1** gives an accurate reading.

It is possible to reach a temperature between 40-60°C in 48 hours. Test the temperature by putting the long stemmed thermometer into the top 5cm of waste for an accurate reading.

## 6. Feeding your HOTBIN

To keep the temperature between 40-60°C you need to feed your **HOTBIN** regularly.

The temperature in the **HOTBIN** will cycle between 40-60°C as you add waste and it is consumed by bacteria.

Aim to feed your **HOTBIN** every 3-4 days

If your **HOTBIN** is not reaching 60°C, refer to the document – How to get the **HOTBIN** hot – online in the FAQ/library. By far the most common cause is lack of waste and lack of easy to digest waste. The quick fix is to add cut grass.

## 7. Removing compost

Leave the hatch door panel in place until you are ready to collect your first batch of compost or wish to recycle the very bottom of the base layer.

If you have been regularly achieving hot composting temperatures of between 40-60 C, take out the very bottom of the base layer at around 30 days and recycle it through the **HOTBIN** for the very best results.

It is great advertising to say 7-14 days, but in truth unless you want mulch, your compost needs to mature and stabilise.

We advise waiting 30-90 days for mature compost. It does vary as soft items like grass and cooked food will compost more quickly than woody items like twigs and pruning's and large lumps take longer than small pieces.

You do have a choice; chop things up before adding – or separate out large lumps at the end and reprocess them through the **HOTBIN** again.

# WASTE TABLE

Some waste is digested faster than others. The size of the pieces of waste also has an effect on the temperatures achieved by your **HOTBIN**.

**N.B.** When you have got your **HOTBIN** working efficiently at temperatures between 40-60°C there is no reason why you can't add things like chicken carcasses and bones into the **HOTBIN**.

A way to look at waste is how easy it is for the bacteria to decompose it.

### Digestibility

**EASY**  
to digest and will generate heat more quickly

**MEDIUM**  
to digest and will generate heat more slowly

**HARD**  
to digest and will generate heat slowly

Chicken pellets/poop  
Grass  
Blood/bone meal  
Dried seaweed  
All food waste including:  
plate scrapings, all meat & fish waste, pasta, rice, mouldy bread and cakes

Kitchen peelings  
Straw  
Manures  
Office paper  
Cardboard

Sawdust & shavings  
Woodchip  
Twigs  
Branches