

Build a Compost Bin from Scrap Wood

Difficulty

Beginner

Time Required

2-4 hours

Materials Needed

- 4 wooden pallets or scrap fence/deck boards
- Wood screws (2.5-3 inch)
- Hinges (optional, for a front gate or lid)
- Drill or impact driver
- Saw (hand saw or circular)
- Optional: chicken wire for pest control

Step-by-Step Instructions

Step 1: Pick a Good Location

Choose a shaded or partially shaded spot near your garden with good airflow and room to work.

Step 2: Build the Frame

Use three pallets or panels to form a U-shape. These will be the back and side walls. Screw them together at the corners.

Step 3: Add a Front Section (Optional)

If you want an enclosed front:

- Add a fourth pallet with hinges
- Or screw boards across the front with space between

Step 4: Leave Air Gaps

Boards should have a half-inch to one-inch gap to allow airflow. This helps the compost break down faster and prevents odor.

Step 5: Secure the Structure

Once it's screwed together, you'll have a sturdy, open-top bin. For extra protection, line the inside with chicken wire to keep animals out.

Step 6: Start Composting

Begin filling your bin with a mix of:

- Browns: dried leaves, cardboard, paper, twigs
- Greens: food scraps, grass clippings, fresh plant material

Turn the pile every week or two for best results.

Maintenance Tips

- Keep it moist like a wrung-out sponge
- Mix it up weekly
- Aim for a 2:1 ratio of browns to greens
- Avoid meat, dairy, or oily food scraps

Why It Works

This setup is affordable, low-maintenance, and great for beginners. Composting reduces waste, builds better soil, and feeds your garden naturally.