

# Composting

Sally Goymer, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire

Could we have a discussion on composting?

I've become preoccupied with the subject. I have three bins placed on earth and made from pallets 3' x 3' each. I was advised to leave gaps in the sides but another expert told me that it would be more successful if there were no gaps, so I lined them with compost sacks and cardboard. Magazine articles say I should turn the compost every so often, timings vary. Experienced gardeners tell me to leave it for 6 – 12 months. It seems to take longer. Are my bins too small as they don't seem to get 'hot' and I keep finding bulbs and bits of potato growing in the bottom? Is there any use for it apart from mulching, and should I save it for certain times of the year?

I also have a wormery which gets fed with kitchen waste, minus onions and citrus fruits. Worm wee gets bottled and fed, 1 part to 10 parts water, to pot plants, but what do I do with the worm poo, which is full of worms?

I also collect leaves. I don't have many so I sweep the street for the leaves of a huge beech tree and my local park is happy for me to collect the ones from the oak. They even bag them up for me and load them into my van! Usually, I store them in old council garden waste bags with carpet and a brick on top. It takes about two years to rot down and I use this as a mulch for hydrangeas in the hope that it will help them to be blue. Another suggestion is to fill chicken wire bins which is open to the elements. How do such opposing systems work and which is best?

This problem will probably seem silly to most of you but until I understand why and what I'm doing it for I'm afraid I may be wasting my time.

x x x x x x

On another subject, I had to remove a glorious, ten foot high Ceanothus from my SW facing back wall due to what I think was honey fungus. I tried to save it for a few years but it was slowly deteriorating. I have since tried a passion flower and a Solanum but both have overwhelmed the site. I have two jasmines already and wonder if anyone has any suggestions as to what I can replace them with, given that I only want white or blue flowers.