

HOME COMPOSTING Without Attracting Rodents

When a homeowner chooses to compost fruit and vegetable scraps with their yard trimmings, a rodent-resistant bin is the best choice. Rodent-resistant bins require a lid, a floor, and no opening greater than 1/4". There are many different ways to compost, and several good choices that eliminate any possible rodent issues.

Proper Handling of Food Scraps

Food scraps must be buried in any compost pile, but if rodents are a problem, then food scraps should be added only in closed bin systems. No meat or dairy products should ever be added to a home compost pile; eliminating bread and other types of grains from the compost pile will also reduce the attraction. Homeowners can also hang strips of cloth soaked in ammonia around their compost area as a strong deterrent against scavengers.

Closed Bins

Closed bins such as the SoilSaver from Algreen Products are designed with a locking lid, while having small opening that allow air to circulate. Bins can be set on a gravel or brick pad. If rodents are already problematic in a given area, then any existing ventilation slits 1/4" or larger may need to be screened as well.

Compost Tumblers

These compost systems are completely rodent proof since they are completely enclosed, and many of the tumbler designs are also elevated above the ground.

Worm Bins

Upward-migration worm bins are completely enclosed and elevated on legs. Ventilation holes are too small for rodents to enter but if the system is outside, weights on the lid are necessary to prevent larger scavengers such as raccoons from entering the bin. These systems can also be set up in a garage.

Food Digesters

Cut out the bottom of a plastic garbage can, punch some holes at the bottom portion of the sides, then sink the can into a foot deep hole in the ground. Pack the soil in around to secure it. Add your compostable materials, and be sure to secure the lid as well.

Pit or Trench Composting

Dig an 18" deep trench or posthole in the ground; place your compostable materials in the hole, taking care to cover over new additions with a layer of soil. You can fill it about halfway full before animals will start to smell it and investigate. You can prepare fertile planting sites in advance using this composting method.