



# Backyard Composting: Cinder Block Multiple Bin

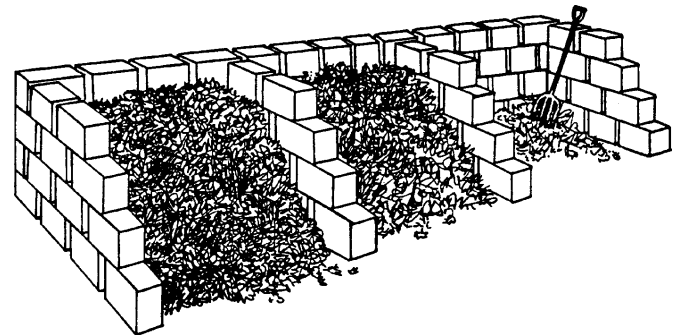
*A cinder block multiple bin looks like three cinder block holding units in a row. It is sturdy, and if you can find used cinder blocks, it is relatively inexpensive to build.*

## What You Need

- about 98 cinder blocks
- work gloves

## Building a Cinder Block Turning Unit

1. Place 12 cinder blocks in a row along the ground at your composting site, leaving about 1 inch between each block to let in air.
2. Place four cinder blocks in another row along the ground perpendicular to and at one end of the first row, forming a square corner; leave about 1 inch between each block.
3. In the same way, place four cinder blocks at the opposite end of the first row to form a three-sided enclosure.
4. Place two more rows - four cinder blocks each - along the ground, parallel to the ends and evenly spaced within the enclosure. This divides the enclosure into three separate bins.
5. Add a second layer of blocks, staggering them to increase stability and leaving about 1 inch between each block. There should be a layer of 13 cinder blocks across the back and three blocks on the sides of each bin.
6. Add a third layer of blocks, again staggering them to increase stability, with 12 blocks across the back of the enclosure and three on each side.
7. The last and top layer should have 13 blocks across the back and two on each side (see illustration).



## Adding Wastes

Do not add waste as it becomes available with this system. Collect enough waste to fill one of the three bins at one time. You can collect woody as well as non-wood waste. Add thin layers of different kinds of organic materials or mix the wastes together.

Before adding new waste to an empty bin, collect enough to fill the entire bin.

## Maintaining Compost

Take the temperature of your pile every day. After a few days, the temperature should reach between 130° and 140°F (54° to 60°C). If your pile gets very hot, turn it before the temperature gets above 155°F (68°C). In a few days, when the temperature starts going down, turn your compost pile into the next bin with a pitchfork. The temperature of your compost pile will increase again and then, in about four to seven days, start to drop. Turn your compost pile into the third bin. Continue to take the temperature and turn the compost pile until the compost is ready. The compost should be stable within two to three months.

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