

Toronto
Urban
Growers

GreenestCity
eat · grow · share

Making a compost tumbler bin

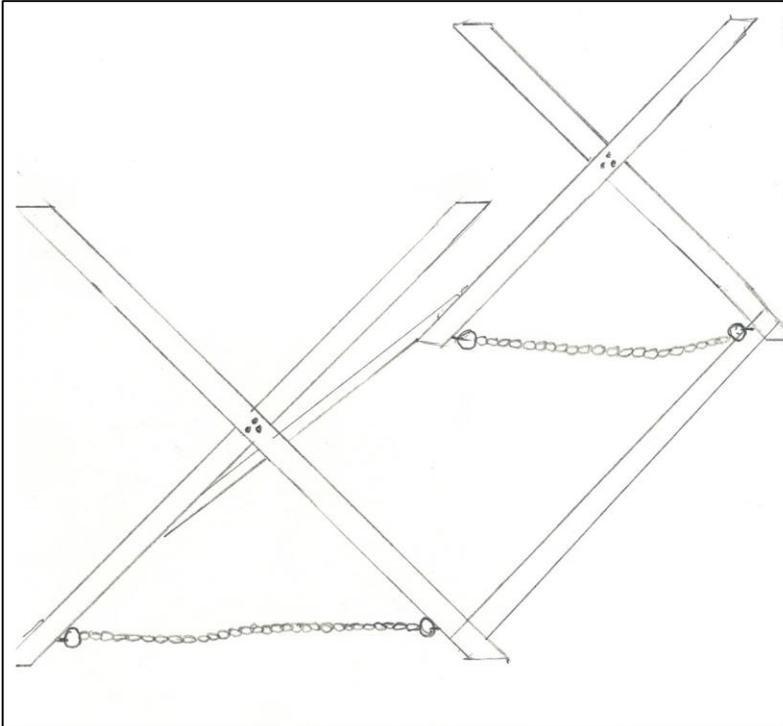
with Mark Jenkins, HOPE gardener





Mark noticed that the triple bin composters at the HOPE garden were too big for some people to work in. It was really hard to turn the compost if you didn't have a strong back. He saw a model of a rotating composter on plantcaretoday.com and decided to build his own.

The compost drum was an old olive barrel purchased from a local store for \$30. To support the drum, you need a dowel that is 6-12 inches longer than the barrel (such as an old broomstick). Cut holes at either end of the barrel and run the dowel through it. Try to keep the hole as close to the centre as possible to keep the barrel balanced. You'll also need a few extra holes for air circulation.



Mark built an X frame to hold the barrel. Keep in mind, a barrel full of compost will be quite heavy! The frame supporting the barrel needs to be quite strong and stable.



Hardware shopping list for supportive frame

3 x 2"x4", 8 foot long pine or cedar pieces (\$3.79 each) Cut two in half to make X's.

1" x 48" metal pipe (\$10.00)

2 chains 99 cents/foot

Eye screw medium (16 cents)

Aluminum rivets #25, 100 (\$4.97)

Back up plates aluminum #25 (1.99)

Bi-metal hole-saw 1 ¼ , 1 3/8, 1 ½ (\$13.49)

Handles (\$4.99 & \$6.49)

6 foot Aluminum stair nosing (tread) (\$15.49)

Piano hinge (\$3.39 & \$10.99)

Wood screws #8, 3" 100 pieces (\$13.99)



Mark cut a narrow door in the side of the barrel so that people can't add large pieces. This way the compost will break down faster.

When adding material to the bin, use $\frac{1}{4}$ greens and $\frac{3}{4}$ browns. The smaller the pieces are when they go in, the faster it will break down. You don't need to add food scraps all at once, adding it in stages will build the compost slowly. It will take up to three months to make finished compost, less if you get the compost to heat up by painting the barrel black and placing it in the sun.

Add to bin

Fruit and vegetable scraps
Crushed egg shells
Coffee grounds
Tea (just the leaves)

Don't add to bin

Meat
**Dairy products (milk,
yogourt, cheese)**



Mark found old stair treads and glued them to the sides to help break up the compost when it's turning. Just watch out for sharp edges!

Mark still wants to modify the bin in one way – reinforce the lid of the barrel. The compost is so heavy it cracked the plastic! He wants to cut a wooden plate fit a good portion of the lid. Make sure air holes are created if they cover existing holes.

