DIY Three-Bin Compost System

This bin system is designed to compost large amounts of yard waste in the shortest period of time. Compost should be ready to use in three to six months.

Compost food and yard waste separately. Pests like ants, rats and raccoons are attracted to food scraps in outdoor yard waste compost bins.

The cost of materials can be expensive, but the bin should last at least 15 years. Visit our website for class schedules and composting tips and resources.
Instructions:

Cut 2×4s—Measure and cut four 9 foot lengths. Measure and cut eight 32” and eight 36” pieces from remaining 2×4s.

Build Dividers
1. Butt end nail two 32” and two 36" pieces into a 35”×36” section. Check to make sure each divider section is square.
2. Repeat for other three dividers.

Set Up Dividers and Build Bin
1. Set up dividers three feet apart and parallel to one another. Measure and mark the center of each of the two inside dividers.
2. Place two 9-foot base boards on top of dividers and measure the positions for each of the two inside dividers. Mark a centerline for each divider on the 9-foot 2×4.
3. With each divider, line up the centerlines and make the base board flush against the outer edge of the divider. Drill a ½" hole through each junction centered 1” in from the inside edge. Secure base boards with carriage bolts, but do not tighten yet.
4. Turn the unit right side up and repeat for the top 9-foot board (at back of bin).
5. Use the carpenter’s square to make sure the bin is square, and tighten all bolts securely.
6. Cut a 9-foot piece of hardware cloth and fasten securely to the back of the bin with staples every 4” around the frame.

Attach Runners and Front Slats
1. Cut the 6-foot 1×4 in half (for outside front slat runners). Nail them securely to the front of the outside dividers and base board, making them flush on top and set in ¼” from the outside edges.
2. Cut the 6-foot 1×6 in half (for inside front slat runners). Center the boards on the front of the inside dividers and flush with the top edge, and nail securely.
3. For the back runners, cut the 1×2s into six 34” long pieces. Nail back runners parallel to front-runners on sides of each divider leaving a 1” gap for the slats.
4. Cut the 8-foot 1×6” cedar boards into 311/4” long slats (18 total). Drop the slats into the spaces between the front and back runners (6 slats per bin).

Build and Attach Fiberglass Lid
1. Use the last 9-foot 2×4 for the back of the lid. Cut four 32½” 2×2s and one 9-foot 2×2. Lay out as shown and make sure they are square.
2. Screw in corner braces and T-braces on bottom side of the frame. Center lid frame on bin, brace side down, and attach with hinges.
3. Cut horizontal closure strips to fit the front and back 9-foot sections of the lid frame. Pre-drill strips with ½” drill bit and nail with 8d casing or finish nails.
4. Cut fiberglass to fit flush with front and back edges. Overlap pieces by at least one channel width.
5. Use roofing nails at the top of every third channel to attach panels to lid frame (predrill fiberglass and lid for each nail hole.)