

# What is a Community Composting Scheme?

Community composting schemes (CCSs) are located on a site local to the community.

The schemes can be run by volunteers, community groups or social enterprises.

Existing schemes in Norfolk are garden waste schemes that make regular collections of garden waste from the local community, and turn it into a product (compost) for use by that community.

The common characteristics of a garden waste CCS are as follows:

- A local site is used for storing and processing garden waste. The compost bins or bays are constructed on this site.
- Bags are given to households wanting to take part, with instructions for separating their garden waste into different types (eg grass clippings, weeds, prunings).
- Garden waste is collected or brought to the site by the householder on a regular basis, such as every week or fortnight.
- At the composting site the material can be weighed (for composting credits).
  - A shredder can be used to chip larger, woody material. This increases the efficiency of the composting process (the smaller the material, the faster it breaks down). This material is then mixed with all of the other material collected.
- The first bin or bay is usually a 'receiving' bin or bay for fresh garden waste at one end of the site. The material continues to break down and is turned and moved from bin to bin to the other end of the site.
- Mature compost from the furthest bin is sieved and bagged, ready for use by the local community. Large pieces that are not yet fully composted are put back into the bins to break down further.
  - The composting process can take six months to one year.
- Schemes often have separate bins for leaves, as this produces leaf mould, which is an excellent soil improver, lawn conditioner or mulch.

As with home composting, garden waste community composting relies on a balance of wet, green material ('greens') and brown, dry material ('browns'). Where home composting requires a 50:50 mix of greens to browns, garden waste in a community composting scheme is split roughly into 40% grass clippings, 40% weeds and 20% shrubby material. However, during the summer growing season there is more grass and, during the winter months when growth has stopped, there is more woody material. To keep the material in balance, woody material can be kept back during the winter and mixed with excess wet, green material during the summer.

Activity tends to be greater during the summer and tails off over the winter.