** This news release from K-State Research and Extension is available online at [https://ksre-learn.com/horticulture-composting-bins](https://ksre-learn.com/horticulture-composting-bins)

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**Compost bin is key to success, says K-State expert**

Domenghini says bin helps to keep materials packed together

*K-State Research and Extension news service*

MANHATTAN, Kan. – Beginning composting? Kansas State University horticulture expert Cynthia Domenghini recommends using a bin to ensure a successful compost pile.

“A number of things are needed for building a compost pile, including a bin, a source of water, ‘green’ materials, and ‘brown’ materials,” Domenghini said.

Green materials include wet and fresh materials, such as grass clippings, food scraps, weeds, or manure. Brown materials include dry and usually dead material, such as fallen leaves, sawdust, newspaper, and wood chips.

A bin will help keep all the compost materials packed together and speed up the process, she said. By ensuring the pile is properly constructed, it will also help generate enough heat to hopefully destroy pests and disease organisms.

Choosing the right compost bin is relatively simple. First, Domenghini says to ensure the size is adequate.

“Our goal is to have a bin that will hold at least a 3 X 3 X 3 foot high mound of material,” she said. “Anything less than this and the process will be slow and will not produce sufficient heat.”

For home gardeners, Domenghini said a 5 x 5 x 5 bin is the maximum size that could be easily handled.

Although compost bins can be purchased, they can also be made or repurposed from another bin. Domenghini recommends a bin made of discarded pallets or a ring of woven wire.

Once a bin has been chosen or made, Domenghini suggests a three-bin system. The system consists of one bin for holding fresh materials; another for the actively composting materials; and a third to hold finished compost.

Domenghini also provided a helpful Youtube video on choosing a compost bin.
Domenghini and her colleagues in K-State’s Department of Horticulture and Natural Resources produce a weekly Horticulture Newsletter with tips for maintaining home landscapes and gardens.

Interested persons can subscribe to the newsletter, as well as send their garden and yard-related questions to Domenghini at cdom@ksu.edu, or contact your local K-State Research and Extension office.

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FOR PRINT PUBLICATIONS: Links used in this story
Kansas Healthy Youth Committees Choosing a Compost Bin Video, https://kansashealthyyards.org/all-videos/video/composting-choosing-a-bin


K-State Research and Extension local offices, www.ksre.k-state.edu/about/stateandareamaps.html

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