

## CAN ALL KITCHEN WASTE BE COMPOSTED?

One of the readers of Transition Haslemere's newsletter recently asked:

*“Is there ANY item of food waste which cannot be disposed of in either the Green Joanna\* or our compost bins (home-made cube and rotating). In other words, do we have any need for the green food waste bin which Waverley Borough Council supplies? We think that no food waste needs to go off-site, but would be glad of a well-informed reply, which WBC waste management cannot apparently supply.”*

Hilary Nielsen replied:

“You are right - ALL food waste can be processed at home, and there is indeed no need for you to use the caddy provided by the council. The 'recycle for Surrey' website says: "The best thing you can do with your garden and food waste is to compost it at home." The best composter for cooked food waste and meat, fish, bones etc (which might attract vermin) is your Green Johanna which is entirely closed and has a strong, perforated base to exclude rats. I would recommend putting all food waste in this device, rather than in any cube type open design since even raw vegetable and fruit peelings can attract vermin. A difficulty is that you may not always have the garden waste to layer in.

An alternative is the Green Cone\*\* which can take cooked food waste, left overs and meat, fish and bones, as well as all other kitchen waste. This is also a closed design, but since the residue is never removed, it has a rather small capacity, and it also requires an activator powder. A large hole must also be dug to install, which is less convenient than the Johanna.

I believe small amounts of food waste can be processed in rotating compost tumblers, though I have no experience of this device myself. Clearly this would be a good method where rats may be a problem.

The best way to discourage vermin in an open compost heap is by frequent turning.

Nothing need go off-site, although you might choose to use the caddy collection service intermittently as I do, and certainly did initially, to support the pilot scheme.

I wonder if your query has arisen because of the recent appearance of stickers on grey wheelie bins saying 'no food waste'? I hope those of us who compost in various ways will not be asked to explain to council workers why we do not always put out the caddy. ( Sometimes I will do so for a chicken carcass when I feel my Green Cone has received too much volume). Most of my food waste goes into a bokashi system\*\*\* inside in the kitchen, which is later added to my open compost, after the initial fermentation. The process renders waste unattractive to vermin. This system does not appeal to all because of having to be inside the house and the need for activating bran which absolutely must be added for the system to be effective.

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Best wishes,  
Hilary”

There are many sites where you can get information or buy one of the above systems, for example:  
Green Johanna – [www.greatgreensystems.com](http://www.greatgreensystems.com)

Green cone – [www.edenproject.com/shop/Composter-digeste](http://www.edenproject.com/shop/Composter-digeste)

Bokashi system – [www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2012/jan/27/bokashi-bin-compost-aly-fowler](http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2012/jan/27/bokashi-bin-compost-aly-fowler)