

# Low-cost wire mesh bins



**Wire mesh composting bins are versatile, inexpensive and easy to construct.**

They may be used as holding bins for composting moderate amounts of yard debris or as turning systems for quick composting of larger volumes. Holding bins are a convenient way to compost yard debris with little effort. Simply add debris as it is cleaned up from the yard. With no effort, besides occasional moistening,

compost will be ready in 6 months to 2 years. Chopping materials, maintaining moisture by watering when dry and covering piles with plastic, and turning the piles occasionally will produce compost in less time. The

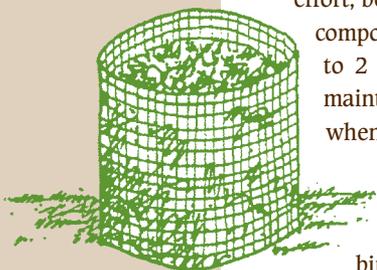
bins can be easily moved to turn piles or to harvest finished compost.

Just undo latches, pull the mesh away from the compost and set it up elsewhere. The pile may then be turned into the bin at its new location and compost can be removed from the bottom.

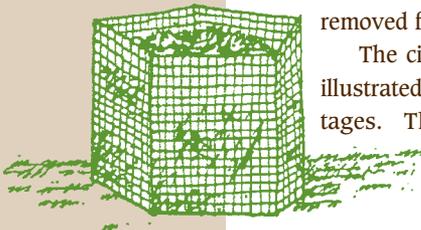
The circular and panel designs illustrated each have unique advantages. The circular bins may be

made for under \$10 from poultry wire or hardware cloth. Poultry

wire is the least expensive material, however it quickly loses its shape with use and requires support with posts and frequent replacement. For a slightly higher cost, hardware cloth creates a self supporting circle which is easier to manipulate and more durable. A panel unit offers a greater variety of uses. Panels may be added to enlarge the bin or to create small bins for turning piles, and individual



**Circular bin**



**Five-panel bin**

## **Pallet bin**

Recycled building material pallets are often available at no cost and can be set on edge and wired together to make a large holding unit.



Recycled



Recyclable

panels may be used for screening coarse materials from finished compost. A sturdy and attractive panel bin can be made with 16 gauge plastic coated wire mesh.

### Materials:

**Circle Bin:** (3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> foot diameter)

12<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> feet of 36" wide 1" poultry wire, or 18 gauge plastic coated wire mesh, or 1/2" hardware cloth

4 metal or plastic clips or copper wire ties

3-4 four foot wooden or metal posts to support poultry wire bins

### Five-Panel Bin:

15 feet of 24" wide 12 to 16 gauge plastic coated wire mesh

20 metal or plastic clips or plastic coated copper wire ties

### Tools:

Heavy duty wire or tin snips, pliers, hammer or metal file, work gloves, and eye protection.

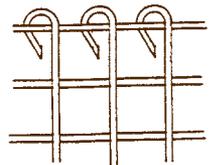
### Construction details:

**Circle Bin** - Roll out and cut 12<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> feet of poultry wire, hardware cloth or plastic coated wire mesh. If using poultry wire, roll back three to four inches at each end of cut piece to provide a strong clean edge which will be easy to latch and won't poke or snag. Set wire circle in place for compost pile and secure ends with clips or wire ties. To provide

support space wood or metal posts around perimeter inside wire circle. Pound posts firmly into the ground while tensing them against wire to provide support.

If using hardware cloth, trim ends flush with a cross wire to eliminate loose edges that may poke or scratch hands. Apply file to each wire along cut edge to ensure safer handling when opening and closing bins. Bend hardware cloth into circle and attach ends with clips or ties. Set bin in place for composting. Bins made with hardware cloth should be strong enough to stand alone without posts. Plastic coated wire mesh bins are made in the same manner, except that bending this heavier material into an even circular shape will require extra effort. Also, filing the wire ends may cause the plastic coating to tear. Striking the end of each wire with a hammer a few times will knock down any jagged edges.

**Five Panel Bin** - Cut five 3-foot long sections of 24" mesh. Make cuts at the top of the next row of squares to leave 1" long wires sticking out along one cut edge of each panel. This edge will be the top of the bin. Use a pair of pliers to bend over and tightly clamp each wire on this edge. This provides protection against scraping arms when adding yard debris to the bin. Attach panels using clips or wire ties.



**Top edge detail**

### The Master Composter/Recycler program

is a cooperative effort of Clark County, Vancouver, Camas, Washougal, Battle Ground, Ridgefield, Yacolt, La Center and Columbia Springs Environmental Education Center.

For information, please call (360) 882-4567.



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