



Bryan TX Office: 979-589-1702 Cell: 979-255-2355 [www.compostcoop.com](http://www.compostcoop.com)  
“Your source in Texas for EcoAgricultural Farming, Ranching & Gardening Supplies”

## BOKASHI & Kitchen Composting

In Japanese the term **Bokashi** means “fermented organic matter. EM Bokashi is a pleasant smelling product made using a combination of inexpensive organic matter substrates that have been infused with Effective Micro-organisms (EM). EM Bokashi has traditionally been used to increase the microbial diversity and activity in soils, waste management and to supply nutrients to plants. **Bokashi** is a non-liquid AEM delivery method for plants, soil, kitchen waste management, compost piles and livestock. Bokashi is a dry brown crumbly material about the consistency of kitty litter. It can be made from rice husks, wheat bran, chopped grain straw, chicken litter, oil cake, etc. Similar to AEM this is combined with EM, water, molasses and other amendments and cured anaerobically for a time to allow the microbes to colonize the substrate. When finished, in a couple of weeks or so it can be used immediately while still damp. Damp Bokashi should be used within two weeks. When air dried it can be stored for up to 2 months or more. For livestock ingestion mix bokashi into livestock or poultry feed (1-5% of feed) or sprinkle bokashi on top of feed daily. It can also be used to inoculate compost piles or used straight in the soil, on crops, vegetable & flower gardens, in kitchen compost and kitty litter boxes too!

### STEP 1:

You will need the Happy Farmer™ Kitchen Composter and Bokashi Compost Starter.

### STEP 2:

Chop kitchen scraps into small pieces. This allows for greater surface area for the microbes to feast on. You can use bones, cheese, coffee grounds, coffee filters and meat.

### STEP 3:

First, lightly dust Bokashi in the bottom of the bucket. Not too much, it may cause blockage in the spigot.

### STEP 4:

One layer (up to 3") of food scraps should be placed in bucket. When putting in meat, bones, cheese, coffee grounds and other hard to decompose materials, use a little more Bokashi.

### STEP 5:

Each time garbage and scraps are added, spread a handful of Bokashi over the new layer.

### STEP 6:

If the layer is real chunky use a wooden spatula or spoon to mix the Bokashi, once mixed, re-sprinkle the layer with Bokashi.

### STEP 7:

Until bucket is full, minimize exposure to air by placing a plastic bag, paper towel or plate over the top and press down. Leave in place until next use.



**STEP 8:** Close lid tightly. Repeat steps 1-6 as food scraps are added.  
**STEP 9:** Drain EM Compost Tea every 2-3 days. Be sure to dilute it 1:500 (2Tbsp/gallon). Use Immediately.

**STEP 10:** When bucket is full, let ferment closed up for 2 weeks then dig a hole or trench in the garden and bury the compost. If you have an unplanted area of garden you can bury without waiting the 2 weeks.



**Compost CoOp sells the Kitchen Composter buckets (Tan/Green in stock), 5 gallon screw on top buckets, Happy Farmer Bokashi and Bokashi we make ourselves.**

## **2, 3 or 4 Bucket System without Spigot**

From: <http://www.cityfarmer.org/bokashi.html>, Sinja Masahara, Vancouver BC Canada

I'll give you a brief overview of how we use EM bokashi in composting, together with a few photos.

We have been using bokashi to treat our kitchen compost for about six or seven years, beginning soon after we cleared a spot for our garden here on Saltspring after moving from Tokyo. I won't go into the details of preparing bokashi, except to say that we mix up 100lb batches every summer, or every other summer, and store the dried mixture in a couple of large plastic barrels. We then keep a smaller bucket of bokashi in the kitchen handy for daily use.

Fresh kitchen compost goes into a white, five-gallon plastic bucket, and can include any vegetable matter or leftover cooked food. We avoid putting any meat or dairy products into it, although small amounts of either are no big deal. We also try to avoid putting in large amounts of liquid. After throwing some stuff in the bucket, we give it a liberal dusting with bokashi; probably the equivalent of two or three generous handfuls before putting the lid back on. More compostable material goes in, then more bokash until the bucket is full. In our three-person household we fill a bucket about every five or six days.

When one bucket is filled, we put the lid on and put it outside on our deck and bring in a clean bucket. When the second bucket is filled, we take the first down to the garden and dig it into the soil. It seems that leaving it in the bucket for a few days helps in the decomposition process. To dig it in, I pick an already harvested or fallow bed, dig a hole about a shovel-blade deep, dump in the compost, put a shovelful of dirt on it, mix the two together, and then cover with dirt. The raccoons often come and dig some of it up, but most of it stays in the ground.

We do all of our composting with two plastic buckets reserved for the purpose. To make opening and closing the buckets less of a chore, several years ago we picked up a couple of Gamma Seal lids, an after-market lid that fits on a standard restaurant five-gallon white bucket. Instead of being a snap-fit cap like a standard bucket lid, the Gamma lid spins on like a giant jar lid. This might seem like a small thing, but because it can be taken off and put back on with one hand, it means that you can open the bucket with one hand and fire the compost in with the other, making the process much faster and easier. The Gamma



Seal lids are available from Lee Valley for about \$10 or \$12 each. *(We have them at Compost CoOp for \$13)*

Some rather grand claims are made for the bokashi in Japan. Whole towns have taken to using it to manage household waste, and some pretty impressive gardens are being grown with it. The EM bacteria mixture is also used in many other ways such as treating waste water and minimizing odours in livestock operations; here on Saltspring it's being used together with liquid fertilizers in Canada's only organic golf course. Personally, I'm not sure how much better bokashi compost is for your garden than plain-old compost, but I can say that stuff does break down very fast in the soil, and that when I dig in the area a month or two later it is absolutely WRITHING with earthworms. Huge masses of them. I can also quite immodestly brag that the garlic that I grow are absolutely huge, and have taken two blue ribbons at the Fall Fair, on an island where people take garlic growing very, very seriously (see photo!).



On a more basic level, bokashi certainly makes handling kitchen waste a much more palatable chore; instead of having a bucket of rotting vegetables under your sink, you have a bucket of compost that has a kind of 'fermenty' smell; somewhat pungent, but to my nose at least, not particularly objectionable. And if bokashi does nothing more than make kitchen compost easier to handle, I think it's all worth it.



## **What we at Compost CoOp do AND suggest you do.**

We have a Happy Farmer bucket (Tan/Green) in our kitchen. We use it to collect all the kitchen waste and we use the spigot to drain off leachate as needed. Then when full we dump the full kitchen bucket in a 5 gallon bucket with a screw on, air tight, top to further ferment. We then rinse out the kitchen bucket and start over in the kitchen.

We have several fermenting buckets that are in different stages of composting. When we have not been able to get the fermenting bucket's contents buried on time (after 2 weeks) we have even mixed some garden dirt into the 5 gallon bucket. This starts the final composting process with your own indigenous microbes. When we did get around to putting it in the garden or the outside compost pile it was much more decomposed. So, we suggest having one or two 5 gallon buckets with screw on tops around to give yourself some additional timing options as to when to put your kitchen compost in the ground or compost pile (or share with a friend or neighbor!).

**In Closing:** A year-round compost system that can be used indoors without the fear of odor issues. This advanced system from Japan is great for apartment and condo dwellers that do not have ample yard or porch space for full fledged composting. Urban homes with backyard gardens can benefit even more from the constant supply of rich, bio-friendly plant food. Using the Bokashi method of beneficial microbial inoculation, the Kitchen Composter anaerobically ferments and pickles your food and table scraps in less than half the time of conventional compost bins. With its air tight lid it ensures the proper anaerobic environment for the fermentative composting process to occur. Get yours today!