

# Leaf Mould Cages



## Leaf Mould- The Easiest Way to Make Compost!

Autumn is the perfect time to collect leaves for composting or for use around your home.

The leaves can be used in the following four ways:

1. As a mulch in your garden
2. As a way to balance the composting of green material in the spring and summer months (e.g., grass cuttings/food waste)
3. As a critical ingredient for bedding a wormery
4. Composted on their own, a lovely weed-free leaf mould compost in 1-2 years time.

## Steps to Set Up Your Leaf Mould System

- ✓ Pick a shady location near the trees that drop autumn leaves.
- ✓ Be sure to keep your leaf mould cages or bins away from ivy, bind weed or brambles/briars so that these weeds do not invade and contaminate the leaf mould.
- ✓ If the pile, pallet bin or cage is placed under a tree, place several layers of cardboard or a woven weed barrier underneath to prevent tree roots from growing up into the leaf mould pile.
- ✓ Build a large enough bin or pile so it can more easily retain moisture needed so sustain the leaf moulding process. Piles can be covered with black plastic to retain moisture in drier summer months. Pallet bins are large enough to make good leaf mould. Cages should be a minimum diameter of 1.5m and can be as large as 3m in size.



<———— Yes:  
Shady location  
Proper sized bin and cage

No: —————>  
Cage too small  
Brambles invading



# Making Leaf Mould & Managing Your Leaf



## Checklist for the dos and don'ts in starting and managing your leaf mould system:

- ✓ Fill with **wet** leaves.
- ✓ Allow leaves from early autumn to settle. Top up bin or cage with more leaves at the end of the autumn season.
- ✓ Keep piles, bin or cages open to the environment so that rainfall can keep materials moist.
- ✓ In drier summer months, check piles for moisture. Mix water into the top layers as necessary.
- ✓ Some leaf mould can be used as a mulch after one year.
- ✓ After two years, your leaf mould compost should be finished and resemble a dark and crumbly compost. You'll find finished leaf mould in the middle of the pile often under a dry layer of leaves on top (see photo to the right).
- ✓ You can screen your leaf mould and return undecomposed leaves to a new or existing leaf mould bin
- ✓ Use the leaf mould in the same way you would use compost: as a mulch, a soil amendment, as an ingredient in a potting or seed starting mix
- ✗ Do not add leaves from the following season to your older leaf mould piles. Start new piles or cages for next season's leaves. This makes harvesting older piles easier!
- ✗ Keep perennial weeds such as ivy, bind weed and brambles away from leaf mould piles, bins or cages.

