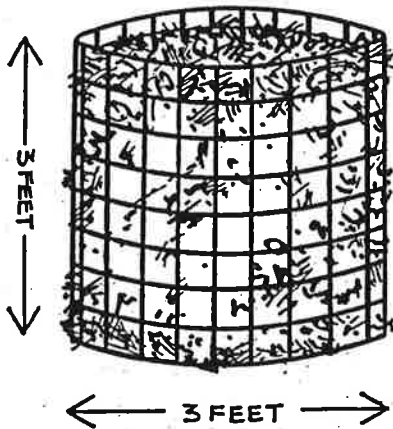


# Wire Mesh Bin

A wire mesh bin is inexpensive and easy to build out of either galvanized chicken wire or hardware cloth. (Nongalvanized chicken wire can also be used but will not last very long.) Posts provide more stability for a chicken wire bin, but make the bin difficult to move. A wire mesh bin made without posts is easy to lift, allowing you to get at the compost that is already "done" at the bottom of the pile while the top of the pile is still cooking.



## What You Need

### Materials

- 12 1/2 feet of 36-inch-wide 1-inch galvanized chicken wire or 1/2-inch hardware cloth
- heavy wire for ties
- 3 or 4 4-foot wooden or metal posts (for chicken wire bin)

### Tools

- heavy-duty wire or tin snips
- pliers
- hammer (for chicken wire bin)
- metal file (for hardware cloth bin)
- work gloves

# Building a Wire Mesh Bin

## If using chicken wire:

1. Fold back 3 to 4 inches of wire at each end of the cut piece to provide a strong, clean edge that won't poke or snag and which will be easy to latch.
2. Stand the wire in a circle and set it in place for the compost pile.
3. Cut the heavy wire into lengths for ties. Attach the ends of the chicken wire together with the wire ties, using pliers.
4. Space wood or metal posts around the inside of the chicken wire circle. Holding the posts tightly against the wire, pound them firmly into the ground to provide support.

## If using hardware cloth:

1. Trim the ends of the hardware cloth so the wires are flush with a cross wire to get rid of edges that could poke or scratch hands. Lightly file each wire along the cut edge to ensure safe handling when opening and closing the bin.
2. Bend the hardware cloth into a circle, and stand it in place for the compost pile.
3. Cut the heavy wire into lengths for ties. Attach the ends of the hardware cloth together with the wire ties, using pliers.

## Adding Wastes

Add wastes as they become available. Nonwood materials such as grass clippings and garden weeds

work best. You can speed up the process by chopping or shredding the wastes.

## Maintaining Your Compost Pile

As you keep adding wastes to the wire mesh bin, the material at the bottom will become compost sooner than the material at the top. If you want to use the compost at the bottom of the pile, you can remove the wire holding unit and place it next to the pile. Then, use a pitchfork to move the compost back into the

moved holding unit, adding the material from the top of the pile first. Continue until you have replaced all the compost. Now the compost at the top of the bin is ready to use.

You also can scoop finished compost from the bottom of the pile by lifting one side of the unit.

Although you do not need to turn this pile, make sure it is moist during dry spells. Compost should be finished in about one year.

