Home composting

In the Takakura composting method, organic waste is broken down by micro-organisms that are cultivated from local materials. The method involves making a seed compost from fermented solutions and a fermenting bed. Organic waste is mixed with the seed compost and left to degrade in a ventilated container or basket.

1. Making a fermenting solution

A. Sugar fermentation solution

Mix everything in an airtight container and leave for three to five days for fermentative micro-organisms to grow.

- 3 litres water
- 200g jaggery (organic sugar)
- 1 piece, cubed

B. Salt fermentation solution

Mix everything in an airtight container and leave for three to five days for fermentative micro-organisms to grow.

- 3 litres water
- 1 heaped tablespoon
- Salt
- Mixture of vegetable scraps and fruit peel

2. Making the seed compost

Mix equal amounts of rice bran and rice husk to form a fermenting bed. Stir in sugar and salt fermenting solutions bit by bit, adjusting the moisture level to 40% to 60%.

Store mixture in a covered carton box for three to five days. The box should feel warm. When the content is covered with white mould, the fermentation is complete. Let mixture dry out. The seed compost is ready for use.

3. Making a compost container

A container of 60-litre capacity is suitable. It should have holes at the sides to allow air ventilation. Suitable containers: plastic crates, laundry baskets or storage boxes; or wicker laundry baskets.

Line the inside of the container with thick paper carton or carpet to prevent spillage of compost and insect infestations.

Fill the container to 60% capacity with seed compost. Leftover seed compost can be kept for future use.

4. Composting

Cut up your kitchen scraps. This will speed up fermentation. Drain excess liquid from the container and stir into container of seed compost.

Maintain the moisture content of the seed compost at 40% to 60%. High moisture content will inhibit fermentation, resulting in offensive odours.

When the container is full, transfer the content into a cardboard box or sack, leaving behind an ample amount as seed compost for your next round of composting. Store the removed compact for two weeks to allow it to mature.

Using semi-mature compost (which has not fully decomposed) can damage plant roots because the fermentation of micro-organisms are still active and will emit gas and emit phlegm.

5. Using compost

Compost gradually releases nutrients into the soil, thereby improving the soil environment.