

# What to Do with the Poo?

## WHAT ABOUT CAT LITTER?

Clumps of urine-soaked clay cat litter will build up quickly and will not break down. It is best not to add this to a pet waste digester. It is OK to add just the cat faeces.

Some cat litters are made from biodegradable materials such as newspaper, straw, or wood shavings.

This material will break down in a digester but you may need to use septic starter more often to help the process.



## The Problem – Pet Waste

Estimates based on Stats Canada figures show there may be as many as 15,700 dogs in our city. Since the average dog produces about a third of a pound (0.15 kg) of waste per day, that adds up to nearly 16,485 kg of doggie doo every week! While many dog owners are responsible pooper scoopers, a great deal of that waste is left on lawns and parks. Disease causing organisms from pet waste run off into the storm sewer system, a direct path to our waterways.

**Dog waste is loaded with nitrogen and bacteria that can *poo-lute* our beautiful Lake Superior every time it rains.**

## The Solution – Pet Waste Digester

Bury or compost pet waste beneath ground level to completely break down the waste and protect our waterways.



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ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS

# How to Build A Pet Waste Digester

## What You Need:

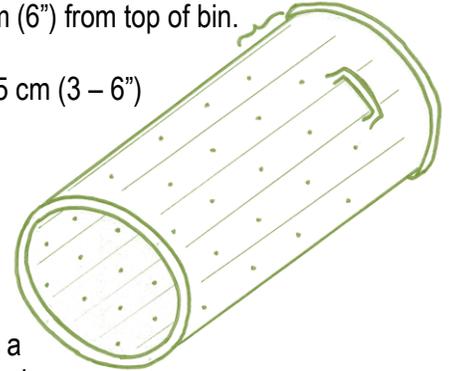
- An old (or new) plastic garbage bin, with a lid
- Drill with a ¼ "drill bit
- Jig saw or narrow hand saw (i.e. key-hole saw)
- Shovel
- Septic bacteria treatment

## Step 1 – Prepare the Bin

**NO HOLE ZONE** 15 cm (6") from top of bin.

**DRILL HOLES** every 10-15 cm (3 – 6") to allow an exchange of micro-organisms between bin and soil.

**CUT OUT BOTTOM** of garbage bin using a keyhole saw, leaving a 3 - 5 cm (1 – 2") lip to help maintain bin shape and strength.



## Step 2 – Site Preparation

- **CHOOSE A SPOT** away from vegetable gardens, preferably out of direct sunlight.
- **CALL BEFORE YOU DIG** to avoid utility lines (see front of phone book for details).
- **DIG A HOLE** slightly wider than your bin, and 15 cm (6") shorter, so it will stick up above ground level.
- **ADD ROCKS OR GRAVEL** in the bottom 5 – 10 cm (2 – 4"). To ensure adequate drainage pour in a bucket of water and make sure it drains within an hour.

## Step 3 - Using the Pet Waste Digester

- Add pet waste every day from walks and from your yard.
- Add water and septic bacteria treatment on first day and then weekly or as needed to help kick-start the composting process and the breakdown of pathogens. Decomposition will be slower in the winter, but contents will shrink in when the weather warms up.
- Adding dry grass clippings or leaves occasionally can be helpful.
- **Use only 100% compostable bags**, newspaper or shovel/scoop to collect waste.

## Troubleshooting

- As the pet waste breaks down it will be incorporated into the surrounding soil where organisms continue the process. Add more septic treatment and water if the waste is breaking down too slowly.
- If you have more than one dog, consider building a second unit to accommodate the extra volume.
- If you find the compostable bags are not decomposing, simply empty the contents into the bin, and put the bag in garbage.
- We do not recommend using your composted pet waste as fertilizer.

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