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Green Cone Tips

Green Cone food scrap digesters have been used successfully for more than 10 years in England, Canada, and the U.S. The following tips will help ensure trouble-free use for you, too!

How many Green Cones does a household need?

In ideal conditions, one Green Cone is sufficient for most households. Large families and those with less than ideal soil and exposure conditions, or those in areas with harsh winters, might need an additional cone. The digestion of food scraps in the cones slows down in winter and it's important to not fill the cone above the manufacturer-recommended level. Once the weather warms up in the spring, the biological activity will increase and the level of material will shrink; at that time, more food scraps can be added. If your cone works fine in the summer but fills up during the winter, you may need to install a second cone to allow for year-round use.

How do I choose a location for my Green Cone?

Green Cones should be placed where they will get at least 1/2 day of sunshine, especially in the winter. The cones also require good drainage to work properly. The installation instructions that come with each cone include detailed instructions for how to improve drainage.

Green Cones can be placed near the house to make it easier to use them. We've learned that the farther the cone is from the house, the less likely it will be used, especially in the winter. If you purchase two cones, you can install one farther away from the house for summer use and one closer to the house for winter use. Or, the two cones can be installed close together—as close as 1 foot apart. If you live in an area that gets a lot of snow, place your cone away from spots subject to heavy drifting snow and far enough away from the house so snow falling off the roof doesn't cover it.



Green Cones can also be located in garden beds or near shrubs, fruit bushes, and trees where

they will fertilize the soil around them. When placing your cone near a tree, make sure it is far enough away so that tree roots will not grow into the buried basket.

In addition, consider the cone size when choosing a site. The cone is 21.5 inches wide at the bottom and the top of the cone is 26 inches high when installed.

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Are pests a concern with Green Cones?

Green Cones are relatively free of pest problems. To help keep it that way, follow these suggestions:

- ▶ After you install your cone, monitor the soil around it. The black basket part of the cone must remain buried at all times. If the top of the basket is exposed to the air, animals may be attracted to the smell of the food scraps. If the soil is settling and the top of the basket is visible, fill the area in with more soil.
- ▶ If you see signs of digging around the cone, sprinkle a repellent such as cayenne pepper around the base of the cone, or use a non-toxic commercial repellent available at garden supply stores. Placing heavy objects like rocks around the base of the cone will also deter digging. Adding 1 foot strips of 1/4-inch hardware cloth around the base of the cone when you install it will provide additional protection from digging animals. *See sidebar.*

Tips for Using Your Green Cone

- ▶ Avoid overloading the cone with one type of material. For example, you can put small amounts of fat and cooking oil in the cone, but too much at one time can slow or even stop the digestion process by drenching everything in the cone. The system works best when a variety of food scraps are added.
- ▶ Empty your kitchen container often, before the food waste gets slimy. The longer the food stays in the kitchen container, the more likely it is that fruit flies and other insects may lay eggs in it, which might cause problems in your kitchen or in the Green Cone.
- ▶ Use a compost bin for excessive amounts of coarse vegetable material, such as cornhusks, cabbage

Keeping Animals Out

Hardware cloth or wire mesh can be used to deter animals from trying to dig into the cone. While you're installing the cone, place 1-foot strips of hardware cloth around the base of the cone 2 inches beneath the lip. Cover the wire with soil, adding enough soil to cover the lip of the cone as directed in the installation instructions.



leaves, or pea shells. This will help keep the cone from becoming overloaded.

- ▶ Remember to close the lid after adding material to the cone. This will help prevent odors and problems with flies and rodents, as well as with pets.
- ▶ To help encourage quick digestion, cut food scraps into small pieces (2-3 inches in size) before adding them to the cone.

Trapping Fruit Flies

If fruit flies become a problem in your kitchen, fruit fly traps will take care of them. Purchase one from a garden supply store or follow these directions for making your own.

Materials:

- ▶ Jar or plastic container
- ▶ Paper funnel (use a coffee filter or piece of paper) that fits the container
- ▶ 1/8 or 1/4 cup of beer, wine, or juice OR 1/3 of a banana

Directions:

- ▶ Place the liquid or banana in the bottom of the jar.
- ▶ Put the funnel in the jar.

The fruit flies will fly in, but won't be able to fly out!

