

COOK'S ILLUSTRATED

COMPOST BUCKETS

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Compost buckets offer a "green" way to deal with the odor of food scraps mingling in the kitchen trash.

list of products tested

- BioBag Food Waste Bags
- Exaco Trading Kitchen Compost Waste Collector
- Norpro Stainless-Steel Composter Keeper
- RSVP International Endurance Stainless Steel Compost Pail

A carbon filter on the lid keeps the smells in but still allows oxygen to enter so decomposition can occur, cutting down on trips to the compost heap. These small buckets fit in a cabinet beneath the sink, and some are attractive enough to keep on the counter. We had test cooks use three kinds of compost buckets (lined with biodegradable bags) over several weeks, recording how easy they were to fill and empty, and if they let out any odors, as well as how often they needed to empty the bucket or toss the liner (we measured this by the number of recipes a cook could complete before having to empty the bucket).

All were easy to empty, all had carbon filters, and each passed daily sniff tests with flying colors. Then one day the lid popped off a bucket that had gotten knocked off the counter, and the stench cleared the kitchen. The virtue of our winner was suddenly clear: Its latching lid won't pop open even when banged about.

WINNER



Exaco Trading Kitchen Compost Waste Collector

This inexpensive green plastic pail is 8½ inches wide at the base and fits on the counter or in a cabinet under the sink. Food scraps broke down as expected, and odors were completely contained.



America's Test Kitchen is a 2,500-square-foot kitchen located just outside of Boston. It is the home of Cook's Country and Cook's Illustrated magazines and is the workday destination for more than three dozen test cooks, editors, and cookware specialists. Our mission is to test recipes until we understand how and why they work and arrive at the best version. We also test kitchen equipment and supermarket ingredients in search of brands that offer the best value and performance. You can watch us work by tuning in to America's Test Kitchen (www.americastestkitchen.com) on public television.