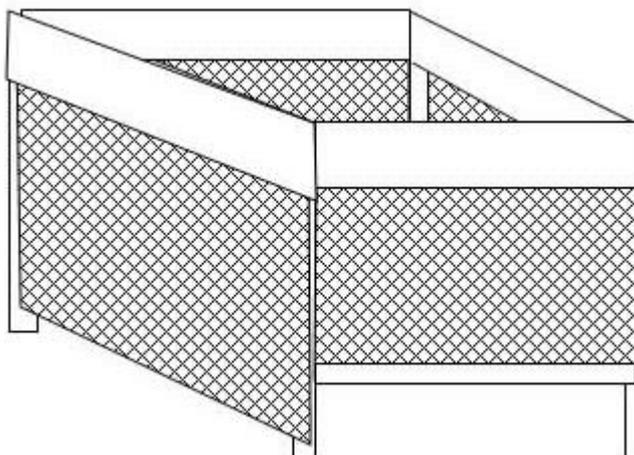


Helping Nature at Home

Making a Leaf Mould Cage – a great way to make your own compost at home as well as a home for hedgehogs and other garden visitors



What you will need:

- 4x 1.2m wooden stakes
- 4x 90cm wooden planks
- Chicken Wire
- Wirecutters, saw, hammer, tacks, nails, tape measure

Instructions:

1. Using the wooden planks, nail them together to create a square frame. Ideally it should be 90cmx90cm but if you don't have the space, you can make a smaller version.
2. In each of the four corners of your frame, attach using nails the wooden stakes (the top of the stake should be attached to the frame).
3. Choose a spot in your garden and hammer the stakes into the ground. Hammer them in until they are stable, at least 30-40cm in depth.
4. Next take your chicken wire and attach it to the frame using the tacks. Make sure the wire is taut around the frame as this will increase the stability of the leaf mould cage. Two sides of the wire should reach from the top of the frame to the ground. The other two sides of the wire should have a 15cm gap at the bottom. It is important to make sure that the wire is cleanly cut with nothing for animals to get caught and injured on. The gap at the bottom will allow animals such as hedgehogs to enter the leaf cage and potentially use it for hibernation.
5. Your leaf mould cage is now ready for use. Gather up leaves and begin to fill it. Avoid using leaves from evergreen or coniferous trees as these will not break down quickly and will alter the acidity of the soil eventually generated. Over the next year or two, the leaves will be broken down and will form a wonderful compost which you can then use in your garden. As the leaves rot down it will also provide an excellent habitat for minibeasts along with a hibernation spot for amphibians and small mammals such as hedgehogs. Be careful to check the soil for animals living in it before you use it.