

LA VERITAT

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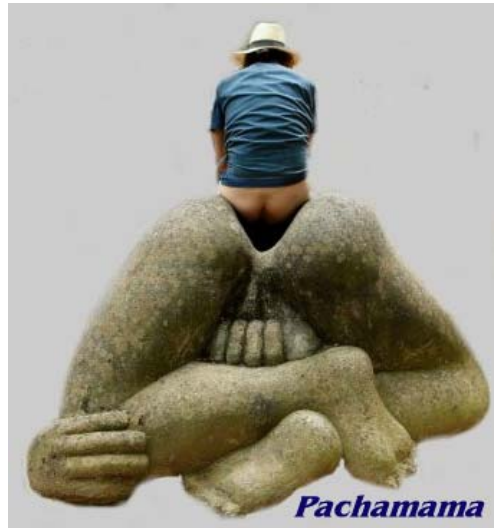


Photo by Willhelm Eger

Survival in times of drought

How to build a composting toilet in your garden

**Dedicated to the people of Norway, where I learned to shit
overlooking a fjord**

Shit is our soul. With shit we can survive. Shit makes us immortal. (Friedensreich Hundertwasser)

First and last chapter

Remember that the great advantage of these toilets is that they DO NOT NEED WATER. They produce a powerful high-quality compost (although it should be diluted with large amounts of earth before using it as fertilizer for the garden).



Basic principle of any composting toilet

The composting toilet we propose consists of a tank (A) (plastic or masonry), whose height allows us to sit comfortably on the wooden board (B), whose hole should accommodate an average human bottom. Provide a round cap to cover the hole.

At the bottom of the tank make a hole (C) of approx. 5-10 cm in diameter, by which urine can return to mother earth. To prevent odors, we recommend to make a good pit (D) below the hole (C) (as bigger the better) and fill it with charcoal (the one used on the barbecue). The carbon removes the odor and absorbs and evaporates the urine (it acts like a filter).

Approximately 10-15 cm above the bottom of the tank, place a grid (E) more or less dense, preferably in stainless steel. This rack should be mounted above the breathing holes (F).

To ensure that the composting process has enough oxygen, the tank sides below the grid should have a series of breathing holes (F) (diameter approx. 20 mm each).

Once this is done, around the tank you can build a nice cabin (G) (wood, masonry, etc.). The door must have a heart cut (H). Obviously, the door must open outwards.

The depth of the cabin should be big enough to sit comfortably without your knees touching the door, and its height should be enough not to hit your head against the roof, which should be tilted backwards.

How to "start" a new composting toilet:

Easy: place on top of the grill (E) an about 5-10 cm thick layer of GOOD (RICH) EARTH FROM THE FOREST or GARDEN (it is not recommended to use commercial

earth). To make it more loose (→ more oxygen!), you can mix the earth with some good quality sawdust and some wood ash

Tip of an expert: While building your composting toilet, bury some of your poop with the same amount of fine sawdust in a flower pot with good earth. From time to time, moisten the flower pot with very little water. When you have finished your work, add the contents of your flower pot to the first composting charge of your brand-new toilet.

Instead of a water tank, place in the cabin a bucket full of fine, good quality sawdust (J). Once you have made your gift to Mother Earth, with a good spoon (K) cover your creation with a good pile of sawdust. This is VERY IMPORTANT, as the sawdust absorbs the liquid of the faeces and keeps the flies away (otherwise, the composting toilet will become a breeding ground for larvae).

It is also convenient to have a small hand rake, with which from time to time you can remove all the earth in the toilet to be more oxygenated.

The secret of good composting: A MINIMUM OF LIQUID (a bit moisture is ok, but not an accumulation of fluid) AND A MAXIMUM OF OXYGEN.

It is also recommended to place a small bulb of 12 volts (NOTE: do not use a 220 volt bulb, as a stream of urine on the fixture could be very dangerous!) inside the tank (in an upper corner) as the mice often come at night to enjoy our succulent depositions).

That is essentially all that is needed for a fairly good composting toilet.

But one WARNING: **You have to love it**, that is, you have to throw an eye always on it. If the compost begins to smell like shit, is a sign that the composting process is not working properly. Take a shovel, get the smelly product out, bury it in the ground and start the whole process again.

A good advice: Throw the toilet paper in a separate bucket with lid, and burn it from time to time, putting the ashes back to your composting tank. Although toilet paper can also be composted, it does not look nice inside the tank.

The advantage of composting toilets is that our dehydrated and composted droppings take very small volume (compaction = approx. 95% of the initial volume), so that the tank fills very slowly. Depending on the number of users (so-called "caganés" in Catalonia), the tank must be emptied at the latest as soon as the compost comes in contact with your private parts ...

LA VERTITAT wishes you much happiness with your new friendly, livable and sustainable composting toilet. The more you use it, the nearer to Pachamama you will feel.

Have good digestion & humor

Manuel Franquesa

Castelldefels (Spain), January 2011

PS. To learn how to manage your composting toilet, remember this Chinese proverb:

**"What I hear, I forget;
what I see, I remember;
what I do, I understand"**

Or, if you prefer Bob Marley:

"You can get it if you really want, but you must try, try and try: you succeed at last"

PD. Please excuse my horrible English, but I am Spanish

My composting toilet since 1991

