



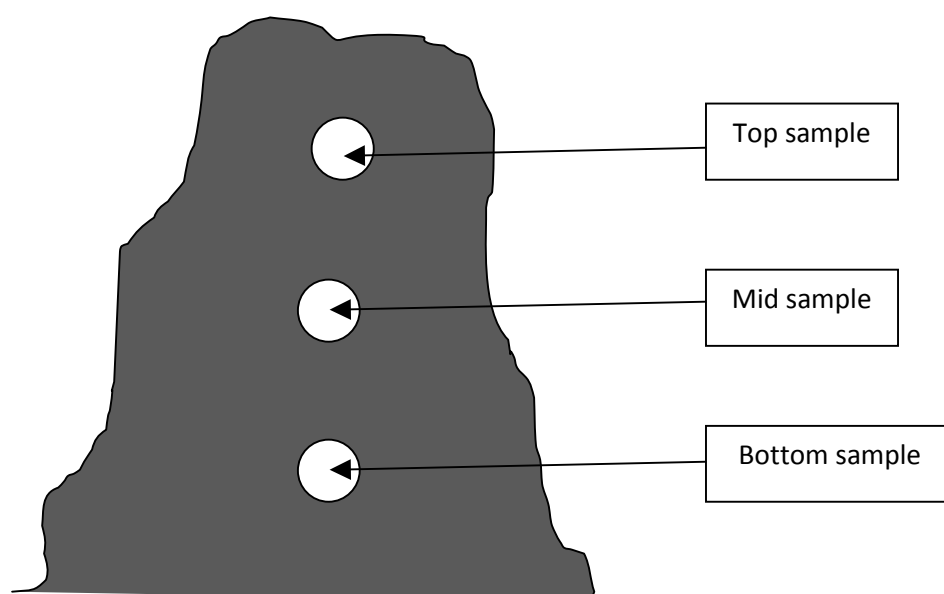
# Compost Invertebrate Survey



Relatively little is known of the invertebrates that live in our compost heaps and no systematic survey of compost faunas has been conducted in the UK. Garden Organic has joined forces with the University of Plymouth in an exciting project to catalogue the fauna of our compost heaps and bins in order to gain a better understanding of their role in the composting process.

We are asking gardeners, master composters/gardeners, Garden Organic members and schools to assist by collecting samples of compost from their compost heaps or bins.

We would like three samples from each heap, but if this is impractical a single sample will do, stating where you took the sample. Samples should be taken from the centre of the heap at three levels: top, middle and bottom (see diagram below).



Samples need to be approximately the size of a large grapefruit (i.e. large enough to fill a small margarine container).

To take the temperature, dig a hole approximately 30 cm down from the top. Place your thermometer in it and cover over. Leave for 5 minutes to equilibrate, then remove and read.

Please send your sample along with the completed survey form to:

Peter Smithers  
School of Biomedical and Biological Sciences  
University of Plymouth  
Drake Circus  
Plymouth  
Devon PL4 8AA



# Compost Heap Invertebrate Survey



Name & Address

Email address

**Type of Input (please indicate the categories of waste that go into your compost heap and the approximate % that they make up of your weekly input)**

Kitchen waste	<input style="width: 150px; height: 20px;" type="text" value="%"/>
Hedge trimmings	<input style="width: 150px; height: 20px;" type="text" value="%"/>
Weeds & garden waste	<input style="width: 150px; height: 20px;" type="text" value="%"/>
Grass cuttings	<input style="width: 150px; height: 20px;" type="text" value="%"/>
Shredded paper	<input style="width: 150px; height: 20px;" type="text" value="%"/>
Other (Please indicate what)	<input style="width: 150px; height: 20px;" type="text" value="%"/>

**How often do you turn the heap?** Weekly Fortnightly Monthly Other (please state)

**Time since last turning (in weeks)**

**Usual time between turnings (in weeks)**

**Temperature (°C) when the sample was taken (see instructions above)**

**Type of container (please circle)** Plastic wooden Wire cage Open heap

**When did you start this compost heap?**

**Please note any larger animals that live in your heap ( Hedgehogs, grass snakes etc).**

**Surrounding Area (please circle)** Yard Urban Garden Rural Garden Allotment

***Please ensure your 3 samples are clearly labelled Top, Mid or Bottom and if only one sample is sent in please indicate which level it came from.***