

Compost Creatures ID

Level One decomposers - *bacteria and fungi*



Actinobacteria (*Phylum*)

These form greyish, cobwebby growths on top of your compost and give it a very pleasant earthy smell



Nematodes *Phylum nematoda*

Small invertebrates that are less than 1mm in length. Bacteria, fungal spores and beetles are included in their diet.

Levels two and three decomposers - *animals with no legs*



Brandling / Tiger Worm *Eisenia fetida*

Bright red in colour these 'detritivores' feed mainly on partly decomposed plant material.



Pot worms *Enchytraeidae*

Thread-like worms (1-60mm in length). White in colour they tend to clump around kitchen waste.



Leopard Slug *Limax maximus*

These slugs feed on dead plants and fungi, as well as other slugs. They are often called the 'Gardener's Friend'.



Garden Snail *Helix aspersa*

An omnivorous scavenger that will eat rotting plant material as well as a wide range of living garden crops.

Compost Creatures ID

Levels two and three decomposers - animals with six legs



Black Garden Ant *Lasius niger*

If left undisturbed for a while ants may colonize your bin. They will feed on seeds, other insects and fungi.



Springtail class *Collembolans*

Using their spring loaded 'furcula' beneath their bodies they can jump 10cm (despite being less than 6mm long).



Bristletails *Archaeognatha*

Wingless insects that feed on decaying plant matter, they can use their tails to spring up to 30cm in the air.



Earwig *Forficula auricularia*

Identified by their forceps-like pincers, which they use for defence. Most feed on decaying plant matter.



Violet Ground Beetle *Carabus violaceus*

Beetles are invaluable! There are many types that live in a compost bin feeding on slugs, snails amongst other pests.



Common Fruit Fly *Drosophila melanogaster*

Often seen in compost heaps hovering around fruit, even indoors. They are only 1-2mm in size and are slow flyers.

Compost Creatures ID

Levels two and three decomposers - animals with eight legs or more



Spiders *Aranae*

The woodlice spider and garden spider are commonly found in compost, feeding on insects and other small invertebrates.



Pseudoscorpion *Pseudoscorpionida*

False scorpions are rarely more than 3-4mm. They resemble scorpions with large pincers but lack the stinging tail.



Mite *Subclass of Acari*

Some are predators; others eat organic decaying matter while some others eat fungi and bacteria.



Common Millipede *Tachypodoiulus niger*

Long and cylindrical, with two pairs of legs per body segment. They feed mainly on decaying plant tissue.



Common Centipede *Lithobius fortificatus*

These are fast moving predators with flattened bodies and a single pair of legs per body segment.



Woodlouse *Oniscus asellus*

Living for up to 4 years woodlice eat the dry materials in your compost heap. When feeling threatened they curl into a ball.