

## HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT THE BOKASHI BUCKET?

By Marjorie Morgan OAM

Boshasi is a Japanese word meaning fermented organic matter and farmers use this method traditionally and extensively in Japan. Professor Teruo Higa of the University of Ryukyu developed a method of using bokashi, also known as Effective Micro Organism Technology (EM) for use on small areas of land.

The Moldichi Olchada Foundation of America, a Japanese non-profit organization in Maryland, developed the bokashi bucket to address the amount of waste in Washington DC. Since then well over 100 governments have encouraged householders to use this method of turning food waste into manure for gardens.

Using the bokashi method it is possible to transform all scraps of fruit, vegetables, dairy products, meat, bones, and fish. Prepared foods such as pizza, burgers, cakes and other organic material including spent flowers and coffee grounds can also be used. This is a revolutionary process that turns waste into soil.

Bokashi is a bran based material that has been fermented with EM and dried for storage and is a pleasant smelling product. It can be purchased at hardware stores or homemade, there are 33,400 entries for "Make Bokashi" on the internet.

The bokashi buckets are available at hardware stores. Each bucket has a tray placed inside and a tap at the base for drawing off the liquid produced. Food scraps are added to the bucket followed by a layer of bokashi. The lid is firmly fitted to exclude air as this is an anaerobic composting system.

For small gardens it is recommended that two buckets are ideal to allow the compost to mature in one while the other is being filled. Alternatively, the mixture can be added to a compost bin and covered with soil or spread about 3 cm deep and cover with about 8 cm of soil. Do not bury near plant and tree roots.

Drain off the liquid produced as often as possible. The liquid contains nutrients and is alive with beneficial microbes and is a very strong solution. For garden and house plants use a teaspoon to 5 litres of water and apply directly to the soil. For trees and shrubs use 2 teaspoons to 5 litres of water. Do not apply directly to the foliage. The liquid can also be used in drains and septic systems as the EM will prevent algae build-up and control odours.

This recycling method will reduce greenhouse omissions, build the soil in your garden and allow you to watch your garden bloom with new life.