



Joseph Jenkins, Inc. • Ecological Sanitation International

The Humanure Store

HumanureStore.com • EcoSanInternational.com • LoveableLoo.com
143 Forest Lane, Grove City, PA 16127 USA
Ph: 1-814-786-9085; Toll Free: 1-866-641-7141; Fax: 1-814-786-8209

About the Toilet Cover Material

The “cover material” is what is used in the toilet to prevent odor, block insects, and create the proper balance of nitrogen and carbon to encourage composting. Toilet contents (feces, urine, toilet paper, etc.) are buried under the cover material. *There should be a clean layer of cover material on top of the toilet contents at all times!* If the cover material is of the correct consistency and moisture content and used in adequate amounts, the Loveable Loo® will be odorless no matter where it is located, without the need for venting or urine separation. If an odor is detected, then more cover material should be used. If the cover material does not seem to be completely blocking odor, then it may not be correct material (it may be too dry and airy, or too coarse, for example). Odorless compost toilets require the correct use of cover material.

The sample we include with the Loveable Loo® shows a suitable, commonly used cover material: sawdust from Pennsylvania sawmills where logs are sawn into rough boards. Any fresh or rotted sawdust from any tree type seems to work. The sawdust is not kiln-dried and is still biologically active. The Loveable Loo® toilet system was discovered in 1977 by Joseph Jenkins because of the availability of local Pennsylvania sawdust and its efficacy as a “biofilter” to block odor. Human excrement, balanced with carbon (plant cellulose), feeds microorganisms in an aerobic compost environment. The finished compost is used to feed the soil and soil is used to feed plants. Human excrement is never used directly to feed plants and never disposed of directly into the environment. The Loveable Loo® provides a means for collecting human excrement in an odor-free and hygienically safe manner, then directing it into a safe and ecological composting system. You must construct your own compost bins or have your toilet contents collected by someone who will compost it for you.

KILN DRIED SAWDUST: Kiln dried boards, such as from a carpenter’s shop, make sawdust that is light and airy and may allow some odor to pass through. If you have a large amount of kiln dried sawdust, leave it outside in a pile where it can get damp and rehydrated and again become biologically active. It will then be a more effective cover material. Sawdust from particle board and plywood can be used as well, but the resulting compost is not recommended for food crops, only ornamental plantings. If using kiln dried sawdust, you may find that you need a heavier layer of cover material to prevent odor and that the loo therefore fills up faster. Or you may need to mist the sawdust with water when applying it.

WOOD CHIPS AND SHAVINGS: Wood chips and shavings are not recommended in home-based compost piles. Very thin wood shavings will work, but they do allow odors to escape and are slow to break down in compost. Larger, municipal-sized compost piles can better utilize wood shavings. Wood chips are not recommended. The larger the wood particles, the less available they are to the bacteria that heat up the compost pile. Fine or tiny wood particles work best when being used as a cover material in the loo. Wood shavings may benefit from outdoor, exposed storage where they can rehydrate.

SUGAR CANE BAGASSE: Another toilet cover material we have used with good success in tropical locations is sugar cane byproduct (bagasse). It also makes a good cover material in the compost bins.

OTHER COVER MATERIALS: Humanure composters from all over have reported that they successfully use rotted leaves (rake them into a pile and let them sit and rot), fresh leaves, rice hulls, peat moss, shredded junk mail (perhaps moistened first), and coco coir (ground coconut husks), among other things. Remember that the cover material **MUST** be carbon based (i.e. it will ignite and burn if dried out and lit with a match).

WOOD ASHES AND LIME: Wood ashes and lime (ground limestone) are **NOT** suitable cover materials. They are mineral based, not carbon based, and they do not feed the microorganisms in a compost pile.

IN YOUR COMPOST BIN: You must also use a cover material in your compost bin, but you don’t need a fine material there. Hay, straw, grass, leaves, and weeds will all work. Pile on as much as you need to block odor. Remember that you don’t put fresh deposits **ON** a compost pile. You put them **IN** a compost pile. Pull the cover material aside, dig a little hole, add your fresh organic material, bury it, pull the cover material back over it, then add clean cover material on top. Lay a piece of wire fence over it to keep animals out, if needed. Line the bin with wire mesh to keep out rodents, if needed.