

Clearing Up a Clogged Drum Screen

You will need:

- 1 - Long Handled Wire Brush
- 1- Nail or screwdriver

Action:

Getting At the Drum Screen

If your unit is an Excel, rotate the drum 180 degrees (3 turns of the handle) so that the drum screen is on top. If it is a Centrex 1000, rotate the drum with the access door off until you see the screen. If it is a Compact, remove the fan assembly to gain access or remove the drawer and access the screen by reaching in from the front. ***With the Centrex 2000 and 3000 models, the drum screen is difficult to reach - it is in the middle of the drum, and may only be reached by removing the fan assembly or, with the non-electric models, reaching in through the drawer opening to access the screen.***

Clearing the Screen

Scrub the screen vigorously with the wire brush. You will not damage the screen as it is stainless steel and riveted in place. If brushing the screen does not clear it and liquid is still not draining through the screen, you may have to resort to having to use a screwdriver or nail to puncture each hole in the drum screen.

Drum Screen Clogged - Prevention

1. Bulking Material Change

If you are using a central system with a flush toilet, use 80% wood shavings and 20% peat moss as your bulking material. If you are using a self-contained or dry central system with a flush toilet, use 60% wood shavings and 40% peat moss. Shavings can be of any kind but cedar, cypress or eucalyptus and should be over ½" in size. For optimal results, use Sun-Mar Compost Sure.

If you believe that you are using the proper bulking material, proceed to step 2.

2. Compost Moisture Level

The moisture level of the compost should always be between 40% and 60%. Basically, it should look like your garden after you water it. Clues that your compost is moist enough are:

a) Color

When looking into the drum, what you see should be a dark, rich brown, excepting of course the wood shavings/hemp stalk. If it is light brown, then it is not holding enough moisture. It should look like freshly watered soil.

b) Gloss/Shine

If a light is beamed into the compost, it should be somewhat glossy or shiny, obviously holding moisture.

To increase compost moisture level:

- a) Unplug the unit if you will not be at the residence/cottage for 3 days or longer.
- b) Add extra water to the unit if it looks too dry. Try using a watering can to add water; it will provide a more diffuse stream so more will stay in the compost.
- c) If the unit is seeing minimal use, not all users are using it for urination, or only 1-2 people are using it residentially, add 1-2 quarts of water per week to the unit in order to keep the moisture level up.

If the compost is too dry, lignin will start to leach out of the peat moss. This is a natural glue-like substance which is diluted enough in regular use that it does not pose a problem. However, if the compost is too dry and has been so for a while, enough of this substance can build up that the drum screen can get covered in a paste. You will also notice that the liquid in the bottom of the evaporation chamber is tar-like in consistency.

When the drum screen is clogged the compost will not be too dry; these are the common causes of the blockage.

Keeping your compost moist also prevents lumps, insects, and makes the composting action go along quite a bit faster.

3. Drum Too Full

You should empty some compost out into the finishing drawer whenever the compost in the drum gets to be around $\frac{1}{2}$ full. If the drum starts to become heavy to rotate, this is the point at which you need to empty (the drum should never feel difficult to rotate). This will not only give you a better compost, but it will prevent the drum screen from clogging.

Compost Recovery

Now that your drum screen is unclogged, your compost will need a little time to recover. For the next month, switch your bulking mixture to straight shavings. This will allow the excess moisture to drain and air to take its place. After a month, you should switch back to the recommended bulking mixture.

For further service please contact Sun-Mar's service department at 1-888-341-0782