

## New Indoor Composting Solutions

Condo owners have many options for indoor composting, beyond participating in municipal services that accept biodegradable food scraps separate from trash and recyclables. Some D-I-Y approaches are virtually cost-free, but they do require research and care to be managed properly. If that's not ideal, there are now convenient kitchen-friendly appliances on the market that can quickly reduce household waste, while creating nutrient-rich compost for indoor plants and outdoor gardens. However, the costs can vary greatly, so it's wise to set your priorities.

When determining the best option for your circumstances, it is very important to consider what you intend to do with the finished compost. For example, you may be considering it as a fertilizer for plants, but some house or garden plants may require specific soil chemistry for good growth. As a result, you may be restricted from adding certain organics. Another decision-making factor may be the unit itself. You might want a large bin capacity or prefer a compact countertop model.



You could be concerned about operational noise – or odour control, based on what will be processed (e.g., fish, pet waste, etc.). Or, you may be an energy-conscious consumer who is concerned about the amount of electricity required to accelerate an otherwise naturally occurring process. So, before you invest in a composting plan, be sure to do your research.



## Are Robotic Vacuums Good Value?

Thanks to their programmable technology, robotic vacuums have become increasingly popular in residential settings. They're coveted largely due to their minimal demand for time and minimal requirements for space. But, how do they compare to traditional, cordless and built-in vacuum systems? If you're considering such a choice, you will need to weigh your preference for convenience, time savings and space, versus having the required power and flexibility to do a thorough job. Despite their many advances, robotic vacuums in general still cannot produce the deep-cleaning suction power of traditional cord-powered vacuums and systems with larger motors.

However, robotic vacuums do offer the efficiency of regularly scheduled quick-cleaning duties, which can be a big help in reducing dust and allergens in the home. Before you buy, look for these features: a large dustbin, a brush-roller for carpets, a wet-mopping pad for hard floors, navigation and obstacle detection sensors, time-saving and energy-efficient mapping (e.g., LIDAR), a remote controlled or audio-command program, and an automatic emptying station. But, don't let all these features fool you into thinking you don't need to prepare for robotic vacuum operation – you still need to keep your floors clear of cords and encumbrances like shoes or pet dishes.

## Will You Actually Own your Next Car?

The landscape of auto ownership is changing, largely driven by the high cost of vehicle ownership, fuel and maintenance. Partly thanks to the lower cost of operating electric and hybrid vehicles, car-ownership groups are becoming a popular choice for urban commuters. This suggests that shared ownership will become a more common alternative for individuals disenchanted with bearing the cost of a vehicle by themselves. Knowing this, some big automakers are exploring shared-lease agreements for multiple drivers, not unlike a cell-phone data plan for families, where partners agree to manage their collective usage.

When considering electric or hybrid vehicles, whether you choose to own them outright or collectively, you should be aware of the terms of the software that operates them. Some manufacturers stipulate that even if you own the vehicle, they own the installed software and insist that only authorized dealers may provide ongoing maintenance and repair. Original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) could also decide to charge subscription fees for simply "activating" certain performance and safety features. Furthermore, as built-in software collects data that reveals information about driving habits, the data could be used to affect warranty conditions and insurance premiums. So, it's easy to imagine



that potential car buyers of the future might back away from the high cost of solo ownership – especially if they don't really own what they buy.