

market garden and campsite toilets



These toilets were built for the campsite, and also to have a toilet in the Market Garden. I wanted them to be easily accessible for most people so I decided to go back to a kind of bucket system so they could be closer to the ground – less steps! For each of them I dug out a hole underneath for the urine container so there would be enough of a drop for the urine to flow into it easily. In no.2 the containers are side by side so the urine has to travel sideways. In no.3 the urine container is under the floor so the urine travels straight down. Urine in no.2: I tried using a different separator in no.2, which was made in England and was cheaper than the Separett ones. However, the hole at the back was too small, so I cut it to the same size as the Separett one, but I didn't have equipment to cut it cleanly, so it left an edge that I thought might harbour germs and smells. Also, it didn't come with a seat or with a pipe for the urine outlet. I couldn't find a pipe that fit the urine outlet, even taking it to the local plumbers merchant and showing them, so I ended up with an ill-fitting pipe that would fall off intermittently. By the time I had spent all that time on it and money buying the seat and the pipe, and it still didn't work very well, the Separett one looked like a bargain! The toilet now has a Separett separator!

Urine in no.3: It was very heavy and awkward lifting the urine container up from its place under the floor!



THE URINE SEPARATION PROBLEM! With lots of the general public using these toilets the problem of poo going into the front hole became really annoying. I had thought that clear signage would mean it wouldn't happen so much - how naïve!!! No amount of signage could prevent it and it made it hard for me to be away from the site for long because it's not a job I feel comfortable asking other people do to routinely. I resolved to build a toilet which couldn't be blocked!



The faeces containers for no.2: these mostly worked okay. It was very quick and easy to change the urine and faeces containers. The faeces containers were 40 litre ex-olive containers which I bought on Ebay for £10 each. I had 8 of them and they had well-fitting lids which could be partially screwed on to allow some airflow when they were not in use. I would always add lots of worms with a little compost when I put a new container in - even before anyone had used it. I would put the full containers behind the toilet and leave them there until the next camping season was about to begin, (only once did I have to empty one of them within the same season it had been filled).

By that time, they were already quite broken down, with lots of worm casts etc. They did tend to be a bit wet and smelly at the bottom of the container though. I would empty them out into containers in my poo composting area - more on this later. An important drawback was that at 40 litres, they were heavier than I would like and quite awkward to handle.

The faeces containers for no.3: I used 220 litre plastic barrels which I got free from a local farm supplier. They had been used previously for iodine based teat

wash. My intention was to be able to leave them longer in situ than the olive containers – having observed how much the volume reduces if you have a larger volume to compost/break down. I laid one on its side and cut a hole for the faeces to go in, making a hatch which could be flipped shut and secured so I could roll it out when it was full. This did not work well! It was too heavy – really hard to move out when full, although it didn't need doing very often.



Other construction notes:

I used a piece of plywood that was hanging around as a temporary roof for no.2. It's still there and bearing up well!

I used Onduline again for the roof of no.3, but put in lots of roof supports to hold it up. This felt like a lot of work for a material that would only last 20 years or so max anyway. I resolved to use steel roofing from now on.

Occasionally these toilets did smell but it was fairly straightforward to sort any smells out by changing the containers. Other issues were the urine tanks overflowing because I hadn't emptied them quickly enough, men standing up to pee and therefore peeing into the poo container and, to a lesser extent, people not covering their deposits well enough. But these things weren't common at all.

Cover material: We used sawdust from the local sawmill, which we kept dry and then put in a bucket next to the toilet.

I put removable wooden hatches over the access space at the back to keep the area under the seat dark.

No.3 had a weird updraft, which meant that when it was windy, sawdust would get blown up towards you when you were trying to drop it down the hole to cover a deposit. I spent an afternoon blocking holes all around the building to stop that happening as it was quite annoying.

I didn't put a stink pipe in no.2. It didn't seem necessary as the container was changed frequently and if there were smells they were easy to sort out because the containers were easy to change.

I put a chimney in no.3, but this was more to combat the updraft issue than for smell reasons.

Incidental: One day a rat fell into a new poo container so when someone went to use the toilet there was a rat jumping up from the darkness towards the hole. Fortunately it happened to a wwoofer, not a camper!

We had 2 camping areas at this point and one toilet serving each one. This meant that if anything went wrong with one of the toilets it needed to be sorted asap because it would have been a bit of a walk to get to another toilet. I resolved to make a proper wash block with two useable toilets in it.