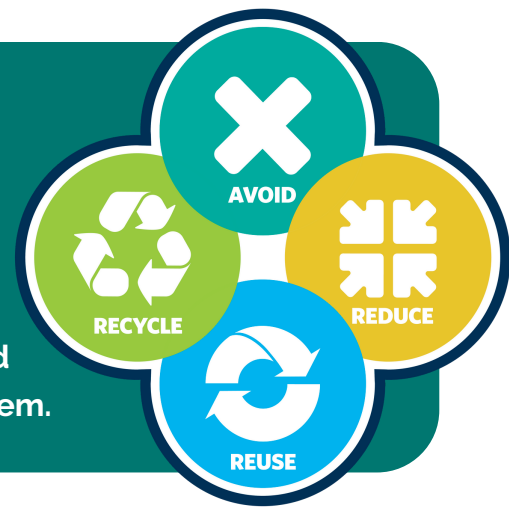


HOW TO

Worm Farm

Worms convert food scraps into castings, which are gold for your garden! It's possible to have a successful worm farm in a container of any size, from a small polystyrene box to an old fridge. These instructions focus on a standard multi-tray system.



WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- **Worm farm** - Available from gardening or hardware stores (some councils provide discounts or rebates). Or make your own from an old fridge or two polystyrene boxes!
- Bedding materials - worm castings, shredded paper, coco coir block soaked in water
- **Compost worms** - at least one kilo or a minimum of 1,000 worms. They're available from some community gardens, specialist breeders or hardware stores (make sure they are 'fresh').
- A worm blanket - hessian bag, old towel, bath mat or similar
- Container to catch the worm liquid - eg. ice cream container



SETTING UP YOUR WORM FARM

1

Start by choosing a cool, shady spot for your worm farm. If you don't have a big garden, a balcony, patio, or even laundry will work just as well.

2

Follow the instructions to assemble your worm farm (you won't need your second working tray for several months). Tip: Prop up one end slightly to help the liquid drain out.

3

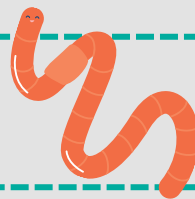
Place some newspaper on the bottom of the first working tray (this has a perforated base). Add your prepared bedding materials and then the worms. Cover with a layer of damp shredded paper about 2 cm thick.

4

Ensure the tap is fully opened with container underneath and gently pour in half a litre of water. Keep the tap open at all times to prevent worms drowning in the collection tray.

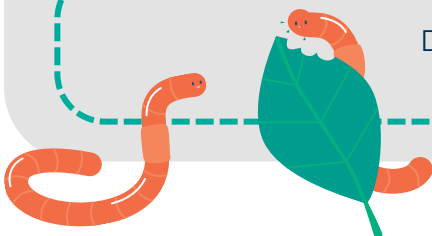
5

Cover bedding with a worm blanket.



6

Do not feed for one to two days to allow the worms to settle in.



ADDING A SECOND TRAY

7

When the first tray is full of worm castings (this may take several months), you're ready to add the second tray. Place it on top, ensuring the bottom of the new tray touches the castings in the first tray.

Add a 5 cm layer of bedding, worms and castings to the new tray. The food can now be placed into this tray.

8

FEEDING YOUR WORMS

As a rough guide, **1,000 worms can eat about 1 cup of food per day**. Bury the food in the bedding to help them get to it and discourage pests - do not leave it on the top. Worms don't have teeth and ingest food by 'sucking' it in, so cutting or shredding the materials finely will help them out!

WHAT WORMS LOVE

- Veggie scraps and leftovers (raw or cooked)
- Teabags and coffee grounds
- Damp paper products
- Garden clippings (not woody)
- Natural fibre clothing
- Straw

WORMS CAN COPE WITH (BUT DON'T REALLY LIKE)

- Citrus
- Onion and garlic
- Large amounts of high nitrogen material (eg. fresh lawn clippings, manure, coffee)

Harvesting the castings

After several months the majority of worms will be in tray two (or three if you've added it). When this tray is almost full you can remove the first (bottom) tray and use the castings in your garden. Or if you can't wait for the worms to move to the second tray, try uncovering one end of the worm farm and harvesting the castings from the opposite end. The worms will move away from the sunlight and stay in the shaded end.

HOT WEATHER

Summer is tough for worms! Without the option of burrowing deeper into the ground, they can easily get too hot, and will die in temperatures above 28 degrees. Gently pour a litre of water over your worm farm each week or place an ice brick in the top to help them beat the heat. The castings should be damp enough to clump in your hands when squeezed, but not drip water. You can also cover the worm farm in damp towels to keep it insulated.

GOING ON HOLIDAY?

Don't panic! Worms can survive unfed for several weeks, provided conditions are right. Before departing, make sure the bedding is wet, the drainage holes are working, and there is plenty for them to eat. Ensure the farm is positioned in a cool, shady spot.

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