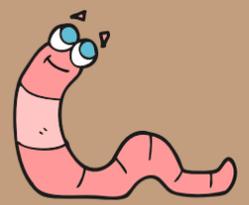


COMPOSTING WITH WORMS



If you live in an apartment or other small space, have very limited outdoor space, or want to compost at work, then worm composting is for you. Composting with worms, or vermiculture, is a simple, natural way to create your own fertilizer using food waste, and it can be done indoors. To begin composting with worms, just follow these steps...

1. GATHER MATERIALS

- A plastic bin with a top. Any bin with a volume of at least two cubic feet will work, but a bigger bin allows for more worms so that more food waste can be composted.
- A window screen or other fine mesh screen of metal or plastic.
- Red worms, also called red wigglers (regular earthworms won't work).
- Shredded newspaper.
- Scissors and a drill.
- Food scraps.



2. DRILL HOLES

Drill 1/8 inch wide holes in the bottom and sides of your bin to allow for drainage and air circulation

3. COVER BOTTOM

Cover the bottom of the bin with window screen or fine mesh to keep the worms inside

4. ADD NEWSPAPER AND WATER

Add 2 inches of shredded newspaper onto the mesh for bedding. Moisten the paper to the wetness of a wrung sponge and replace it every 2-4 months

5. ADD WORMS

How many worms depends on how quickly you want the garbage to disappear, but you don't necessarily need to start with a huge number. As a general rule, one pound of worms will eat one pound of garbage and produce one pound of castings in one day. Keep in mind that the worms will be reproducing as well as eating.

6. ADD FOOD SCRAPS

Start with a small amount of food, about equivalent to the weight of the worms you have, and add more as needed. As the worms multiply, the amount of food can be increased. Keep the bin covered to prevent flies from laying eggs on the food.

7. STORE YOUR BIN

Store the bin in a place that will maintain a relatively constant temperature. You can place the worm bin indoors or out as long as it doesn't get too hot or too cold.

8. COLLECT WORM CASTINGS (EXCREMENT)

Simply remove the lid and the worms will burrow down to escape the light (to make the worms move more quickly, you can shine a light directly into the bin). Carefully scoop out the castings, which look like dirt. Use the castings in all the ways you would use compost.