



WORM HOTEL Startup Guide

***** Make sure you have fully tighten all parts before adding the bedding and worms to it. *****
***** When full, the composting bag can be very heavy and may cause injuries if not properly operated. *****

Bedding preparation



In a large bucket, place the coconut fiber with roughly 2L of lukewarm water so that it swells and breaks into pieces. More water may be needed, add as much as necessary for the coco brick to be fully expanded and fluffy. This may take 15-30 minutes. Coco should be all fluffy and web but not soggy.

In the meantime in another large bowl or bucket, soak the cardboard for about 30 minutes then drain and squeeze excess water.

When the coco is fully expanded and the cardboard ready, mix all together with also 1 tablespoon of soil amendment, the bag of pumice and the nematode pouch.

When available, add 2 cups of outside soil or ripe homemade compost (no bagged soil). This provides the microorganisms necessary for the good start of the vermicomposter. If you bought worms with the composter, our bedding already contains the required beneficial bacterias to help the startup process.

Mix everything together, add water as needed, until the mixture is moist, but not soggy. Squeeze a part of the mixture in your hand, it should run 1-2 drops, no more. If the mixture is too wet, add a little dry cardboard to obtain the desired humidity.

Worm bag startup

Place 3-4 sheets of newspaper at the bottom of the bag, the ink color is not toxic, only avoid glossy papers. This step temporarily limits access to the bottom opening the time worms get used to the environment. Spread your previously prepared mixture evenly on the newspaper and add the worms on top. Leave a light on so the worms integrate into their new home. Once the worms disappear, you can close the bag.

Wait until the next day before feeding them. Go according to the worms quantity, knowing that worms eat half their body weight per day (after the first 2 weeks of adaptation). Start slow, see how it goes, never overfeed, you should never smell rotten food, that means you overfed. With each feeding, add browns (see section below). It's possible and normal that some will venture on the walls or even under the lid, it is normal, they are exploring!

Ventilation flap

According to bedding moisture, you can open/close the flap to help lower/keep the humidity. Use a soil meter, check that the humidity is around 8 on the 0-10 scale. The mixture must always remain moist, without being soggy. Decomposing fruits / vegetables will also create moisture, so it is most likely that you will not have to add any water.

pH verification

Provided pH meter gives you an indication of the acidity in the bin. It should indicate a neutral pH between 6.5 and 7. Regularly add rinsed and then crushed eggshells to keep a neutral pH. Crushed oyster shells are also a good natural pH balancer. A tablespoon of pure Oyster shell can balance an acidic bin in no time.

Feeding

The worms need to have a balanced ratio between the materials rich in carbon also called "brown" (packing box, pizza box, egg carton, roll of toilet paper, newspapers...) and those rich in nitrogen, called "green" (mainly fruits / vegetables but also in small quantities bread, pizza crust, baked pasta). This ratio should be 1:1. This parameter is essential for the balance of your vermicomposter. Worms have a good appetite for anything that would normally go to your compost. The presence of ink is not a problem. The toxic metals it contained in the past are now banned. Glossy or heavily printed paper should still be avoided.

Cut out your waste so that it is not too big (pieces of about 2 cm). The more finely chopped they are, the more quickly they will be degraded by the worms. Store your waste in a container, tightly closed to avoid odors, at room temperature. This storage gives the worms slightly wilted food. Microorganisms will have developed and will be used to feed the worms. Empty this container into the vermicomposter once to three times a week, without forgetting to cover the waste with a thin layer of litter. Try to alternate the places where you bury waste.

To avoid fruit flies in the vermicomposter, you can freeze your food then thaw it, freezing breaks the cells and accelerates decomposition in addition to destroying the fly larvae that could be on the surface of the peels

Exceptions

Your new friends dislike certain foods such as: onion, garlic, leek and all citrus fruits (also very acidic). A few pieces here and there will eventually disappear without a problem, but avoid the large amounts of orange peel from the morning juice! Other foods such as dairy products, meat and fish, sauces and prepared foods should not go to the vermicomposter.

Collect the compost

Since this composting bag is a continuous flow, you feed on top and collect at bottom. After roughly 3-4 months, you can start collecting your compost and on a regular basis depending on the quantity of worms, the pace may differ. Compost should be black, without uneaten food. Simply remove the velcro bottom and loosen the string. collect your compost and replace the bottom part until the next harvest.

CAUTION: This compost is alive! It should never be left in an airtight container or a bag without ventilation, it must breathe in order to stay "alive". It can be stored for several months for future use. Best way to keep it is in sand bags, available in many stores.

Happy vermicomposting !