

EASY DIY WORM BIN

An affordable and effective way to get started with worm composting!



SUPPLIES YOU'LL NEED:

1. **One or more plastic bins** - we recommend Rubbermaid Roughneck or Home Depot HDX
2. **A separate tub** for mixing (optional)
3. **A spray bottle** for moistening
4. **A drill with ¼" bit**
5. **Worm bin bedding** (and maybe other habitat materials)
6. **Composting worms**
7. **A small amount of compostable kitchen scraps** to get started

We Recommend:

- Bins in the range of 40-70 litre (10.6 - 18.5 gal) - not buckets.
- Durable, opaque plastic - not clear or brittle plastic.

Important Requirements:

- **Ventilation** - Accomplished by drilling holes in the sides and lid.
- **Safe Location** - Ideally, in an indoor location that's convenient, out of direct sunlight, where temperatures between 16 and 26 C can be maintained.



Enrich your soil naturally.

BASIC BIN SET-UP

Step 1 - Drill Your Holes

A good guideline (for recommended bin size) is 20 evenly-spaced holes in the lid and 10 on each side.

NOTE: Make sure all debris is removed from the drill holes, to avoid harming your worms.



Step 2 - Build Your Habitat

A worm bin should contain mostly carbon-rich bedding. We recommend a ratio of 70-80% bedding to 20-30% food. Great choices for bedding include shredded cardboard, coco coir and hemp tow - or, even better, a combination of all three! It's helpful to think in terms of 3 main zones:

1 - Bottom Bedding Zone (¼ volume) -

This provides some separation from the bottom of the bin, and is helpful for soaking up excess moisture. Bulky shredded corrugated (avoid glossy) is great since it absorbs water and also encourages better airflow. This bedding can be added dry.

2 - Worm Zone (½ volume) -

A damp mix of different bedding - and other habitat materials, plus starter food and your worms. Adding "living material" - such as really old, rotten fall leaves, well aged horse manure, or finished compost - will help to kickstart the microbial population. It's helpful to mix everything up and moisten in a separate tub or tray before adding on top of your bottom bedding.

3 - Cover Bedding Zone (¼ volume) -

Similar to bottom bedding, this is where you add dry, absorbent materials, like shredded cardboard, coco coir, and hemp tow as a final layer in the system. You can combine this loose bedding with a worm blanket for extra protection (optional).

Step 3 - Add Your Worms & Food

For a 40-60 litre bin, we recommend ½ to 1 lb of Red Wiggler Worms. Add them directly on top of the Worm Zone, along with a handful of easy-break-down food, like melon, leafy greens, or banana peel.

NOTE: You may want to get everything set up without the worms, and let the system sit for 5-7 days before adding them. This allows decomposition to start and the microbial population to grow.

For a much more detailed look at this topic, check out our "DIY Plastic Worm Composting Bins" article at PacificComposting.ca!



DOUBLE BIN SET-UP

How This is Different From the Basic System:

- Has the benefits of drainage and "continuous flow" (castings separation).
- You will use 2 identical bins that can easily nest in one another.
- There will always be one primary "active bin" going.
- Once the active bin gets about ¾ full with mostly-finished material, the lid will be removed and the second bin (set up ahead of time) will be placed directly on top.
- After worms migrate, the lower bin is removed and the process is repeated



Step 1 - Prepare Your Bins

Drill about 20 holes in one lid, 20 holes in the bottom of both bins, and 10 holes in the sides of both bins.

NOTE: It is especially important to clean out the bottom (migration / drainage) holes of debris!

Step 2 - Build Your Habitat

Follow the exact same steps outlined for the Basic Bin, but in this case line the bottom of your first bin with some sheets of newsprint to avoid escaping worms.

Step 3 - Add Your Worms & Food

Once again, just follow the same steps as outlined for the Basic Bin.

Step 4 - Adding Your 2nd Bin (In 2 or 3 Months)

When the first bin is quite full and material seems well-processed, take off the lid and place a newly set-up second bin on top (NOTE: don't add newsprint in the bottom of the second bin - it will block migration). Wait until most of the worms move up (hopefully 2 to 3 weeks), then remove the lower bin.

Step 5 - Harvest Your Black Gold!

Once it seems like most of the worms have moved up into the new "active bin", the lower bin can be harvested. By this point it should mostly contain finished worm castings, and be mostly worm-free.

Managing Drainage

Use the non-drilled lid as a basic catch tray for drainage, or some other tub/tray. Prop up the active bin with bricks (or something similar) to provide separation between the active system and any drainage liquid that accumulates.