

HOW TO SET UP YOUR WORM FARM



1

LOCATION OF THE WORM FARM

Ideally, find a place in a cool and shady area that does not get direct sunlight, like under a tree. Inside, the worms can be placed on a balcony or garage.



2

PREPARING YOUR WORM BEDDING

Worm bedding will absorb and hold moisture, while allowing oxygen to penetrate the bedding.

Examples of worm bedding: Coco coir, newspaper/ cardboard, leaves, well aged manure, straw or hay

Select worm bedding material – best is to combine a mixture of the above and to shred the newspaper and cardboard into strips.

COCO COIR instructions: Your worm farm may come with a coco coir block. Break up the coco coir and soak all material in a container overnight or at least 12 hours prior to placing worms in the bin.

Place the bedding in the middle tray of the worm farm, stacked approx. 7cm deep. Squeeze out the excess liquid from the worm bedding. The worm bedding should be as moist as a squeezed-out sponge (not too wet).

Make sure your bedding is well done and retain moisture for your worms, as worms thrive in a moist environment.



3

ADDING FOOD TO THE WORM FARM

Add your worms on top of the worm bedding in the middle tray. The worms should burrow downwards into the bedding as they do not like the light.

Do not feed your worms for a day or two, so to give them some time to settle in. Remember the worm bedding that you have prepared is food for the worms so give them some time to get used to their new environment.

You will first feed the middle tray until it is full. Once the food scraps have filled up the middle tray, then start putting the food in the top tray. The worms will migrate upwards and follow the food.

Start adding food in small quantities at first (on top of the worm bedding). Increase feeding with time. Place the worm food on top of the bedding and don't overfeed.

The contents of the compost bin should always be moist before adding to the worm farm. If it is too dry, add some water. Do avoid fresh tap water (due to the chlorine).



Under the right conditions, your worms will not leave your bin. Worms are top feeders and will always migrate upwards to follow the food supply.

For the first few weeks, open the worm farm once a day to check if all is in order. (A healthy worm farm should never smell bad). The excess liquid of your worm bin will be at your bottom part of the worm farm (with tap) and can be harvested as worm tea (liquid plant food).

If you have, add a “worm blanket” on the top of the food scraps – the blanket can be used to keep the worm farm moist (by adding water on it), and to deter fruit-flies from getting to the food scraps.

AFTER THE INITIAL SET-UP



WHAT CAN YOU FEED YOUR WORMS

Fruit: apples, pears, banana peels, strawberries, peaches, grapes, all melons.

Vegetables: beans, cabbage, celery, carrots, tomatoes, cucumbers, all greens, corn, corncobs, squash.

Cereals and grains: oatmeal, pasta, rice, non-sugared breakfast cereals, cornmeal, pancakes.

Coffee filter paper, tea bags, eggshells, dead flowers. Newspaper (no shiny/coated paper), cardboard, paper egg cartons, leaves.

FEEDING VOLUMES

Turn the bedding once weekly - this will ensure better aeration in the bedding and encourage breeding.

Worms do not like to get too hot or too cold. Ideal temperature is 15 to 30 degrees.

Worms like a varied diet—they like to have a mixture of fruit and vegetables and carbon containing material such as paper, cardboard and leaves.

When feeding the worms, feed half the worm tray per feeding session. By feeding only a portion of the bed at a time, it allows the worms to move to a cooler section of the bed if the food begins to heat up.

Feed your worms only as much as they can eat. The worms will take a little time to get going, so it's best to feed them slowly first and then increase the food.

If your worm farm goes smelly you are most likely overfeeding your worms. If smelly, stop feeding for a few days, and mix the food scraps into the soil and castings.



For best results, chop up food scraps as small as possible before feeding to worms. Worms do not have teeth so they prefer their food in smaller pieces, however once large pieces become softer the worms will consume the food.

Food scraps need to breakdown and become soft first before your worms can digest them, this can take anywhere from 2 days to 2 weeks. If your worms stop eating it is likely that they do not like the food that you are feeding them. Worms will also reduce the amount of food they consume in lower temperatures or if the worm farm is too wet.

WHAT NOT TO FEED WORMS

Meat, poultry, fish - this can attract rats to the worm farm.

Dairy, cheese and milk.

Sweets, potato chips and oil - this will attract ants to the bin.

Oranges, lemons and limes - will make the bin too citrus and could be toxic to the worms



HARVESTING THE VERICOMPOST

Feed only one side of your worm farm for two weeks before harvesting your vermicompost.

The worms will move to where the food is, which will ensure that most of the worms will move to the other side.

Once the worm farm is full, empty the contents of the worm farm on a table or board. Push all worm castings together into the shape of a cone and wait for 10 minutes, then scrape off the surface of the cone worm castings and worm compost until you reach the worms which are hiding from the sun.

Give the worms 10 minutes to dig deeper into the soil to escape from the sun. Remove more castings until you reach the worms again.



Repeat these steps until all the castings are separated from the worms.

Now place approx. 10 cm of castings on top of the drain in your worm farm, place the worms on some food at the top and restart your worm bin.

Now that the worms have been separated from the worm castings and returned to the worm farm, you can now use your vermicompost in your garden.

