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Worm Composting

Everything You Wanted To Know about Worms But Were Afraid to Ask

Worm composting systems are neat, easy and odorless, and work well for people living in apartments, condos or just about anywhere. This method of composting is also practical for people whose physical activity is limited or impaired. Busy redworms turn food scraps and plant trimmings into some of the best organic fertilizer on Earth, called **worm castings**. Composting with worms, also called **vermiculture**, is relatively effortless. Setting up the growing bin for the first time, and periodically harvesting the castings, is all that is required.

Getting Started

For a household of two persons, a bin two feet square and 8 to 12 inches deep will suffice. The bin can be made of any substance. It must be kept dark inside and must have a lid to keep out rodents and flies. The bottom should have holes spaced at about 3 inches for drainage and ventilation.

Where To Put the Worm Bin

Locate your bin where it will get good air circulation and will not freeze or overheat. Worms prefer 55 - 75 degrees F. If the bin is placed outside, be sure to locate it in full shade.

Making A Bed for the Worms

The first step in setting up a

worm bin is to prepare the bedding material. In nature, redworms are found among masses of decaying vegetation such as fallen leaves, manure piles, or under rotten logs. A suitable common medium is hand-shredded newspaper moistened to about the dampness of a wrung-out sponge. Fill the bin 3/4 full and fluff up the shreds. Sprinkle the bedding with a few handfuls of soil. **DO NOT** use glossy paper as from magazines; the paper must be water absorbent.

Worms For Your Bin

Compost worms are often called **red worms** or **red wigglers**. They are different from earthworms and night-crawlers that live underground. Ask us about purchasing these.

Maintenance and Feeding

Apply about one quart of food scraps per square foot per week. Worms eat fruit and vegetable scraps, pasta, bread, and other kitchen leftovers. They love coffee grounds and filters, tea bags, paper towels, and napkins. Egg shells are a real favorite which aid their digestion of food. **DO NOT** add animal products such as cheese, oil, bones, and meat. To eliminate fruit flies, place a small jar with about an inch of vinegar in the corner of the bin, being careful not to spill any of the vinegar in the bin. [continued]

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