

How to use your compost:

Fertilizer:

Use your finished compost as a soil conditioner in plant containers and the garden.

Make potting soil:

1/3 sifted compost, 1/3 soil, 1/3 vermiculite

Use the liquid:

Diluted (one part liquid with 10 parts water) as a plant fertilizer. You can call this worm tea.

Compost problems?

Symptom	Diagnosis	Treatment
Unpleasant odour	Too much food	Stop adding food.
	Not enough air	Gently stir contents (aerate).
	Too moist	Ensure proper drainage: check that the drainage holes are clear, or drill more holes.
	Too many acidic foods (citrus, coffee grounds)	Cut back on acidic foods. Add a little dolomite lime or ground eggshells.
Fruit flies	Food left exposed	Always bury food. Cover surface of bin with plastic sheet, old carpet, or sacking.
	Too much food	Don't overload the bin. If problem persists, move the bin to a location where the flies won't bother you.



Five great reasons to compost with worms:

1. Improves your garden

Compost is an excellent conditioner for your soil, increasing the amount of air and moisture reaching the roots for larger, healthier, plants.

2. Reduces your garbage

Worm composting is an effective way to reduce kitchen waste going to the landfill.

3. It's easy

Once your worm bin is established, adding materials and bedding become routine. Everyone in the home can participate and feel good about making a difference.

4. Reduces use of chemical fertilizers

Compost provides valuable nutrients to plants, eliminating the need for chemical fertilizers. Composting returns nutrients to the garden.

5. Helps the environment

Managing your organics in your backyard reduces the need for more trucks on the road and recycles nutrients back into the earth.

Composting is nature's way of breaking down vegetation using worms, good bacteria and other organisms.

A GUIDE TO

Worm Composting



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Composting with worms. 7 easy steps:

1. **Determine a convenient location** in your home for your worm bin where the temperature is between 15 - 26 degrees Celsius.
2. **Prepare the bedding** for your worms. Great choices include shredded newspaper, shredded cardboard or shredded leaves.
3. **Dampen the bedding** so its overall moisture level is like a wrung-out sponge. Gently fluff the bedding to create air spaces.
4. **Add the worms.** A half a pound is a good start.
5. **Add food scraps** by pulling aside some of the bedding, dumping in the scraps and covering the scraps with bedding. Add food in a grid pattern so the worms move around through the bin.
6. Once the bottom tray is filled **add another tray** of bedding and more food. The worms will migrate upwards to the newest food source leaving the bottom tray full of nutrient rich compost.
7. **Harvest your compost** in three to six months.



Harvesting your compost:

Worms work hard and fast. In 3 - 6 months, there will be little or no original bedding visible in the bin. The contents will be brown and earthy-looking. It is time to remove some of the finished compost.

1. **Add a tray**
If you have a tray system worm bin all you have to do is add another tray to the top, fill with fresh bedding and fresh food. Eventually the worms will move up into the fresh tray and leave the lower tray with finished compost
2. **Dump and sort**
Dump entire contents of the worm bin under a bright light. Remove visible bedding and then make small mounds of compost. Worms will move down away from the light and you can remove outer layer of the mound until you have just piles of worms left.
3. **Worms sort themselves**
Move all the bin contents to one side and then add fresh bedding on fresh food to the other side. In time the worms will move over to the fresh side.
4. **Divide and dump**
Harvest two-thirds of the worm bin, leaving one third for the next batch. The worms left behind will repopulate the bin in a few months.

The worms used in a composter are called red wigglers (also known as brandling or manure worms).

Get worms by purchasing them or collect them from an older manure pile in a barn.

What to compost:

Brown material (bedding material)

Use a mixture of bedding to provide more nutrients for the worms and to create a richer compost (worms like variety)! Add two handfuls of sand or soil to the bedding for grit. Because worms do not have teeth, they use the grit to grind their food.

✓	Leaves	Shredded fall leaves
✓	Newsprint	Shred
✓	Cardboard	Cut some into small pieces or shredded
✓	Dead plants	
✓	Brown paper bags	Shred
✓	Grass clippings (dry)	
✓	Straw	Chopped
✓	Compost	

Green material (acceptable food)

✓	Kitchen scraps	Vegetable peelings and rotting fruit
✓	Plant trimmings from your garden	Leaves, old flowers, end-of-season greenery
✓	Coffee grounds and tea leaves	
✓	Eggshells	Rinse and crush
✓	Vegetables and fruit	Cut into thumb-sized pieces for faster composting. Note: no salad dressing

Unacceptable materials

✗	Grease, cooked food including rice or pasta, oils	To avoid pest and odour problems, do not compost meat, dairy, oily foods or grains
✗	Fish, meat, bones	
✗	Dairy	

*Well-tended worms make great compost
If you supply the right ingredients and care, your worms will thrive and make compost for you.*