

WORM COMPOSTING



Recycle

Food Scraps indoors or out - It's fun - It's Smart

WHY COMPOST?



Composting is nature's way of recycling. It's a satisfying way to turn your fruit, vegetable, and yard trimmings into a dark crumbly, sweet-smelling soil conditioner.



COMPOSTING:

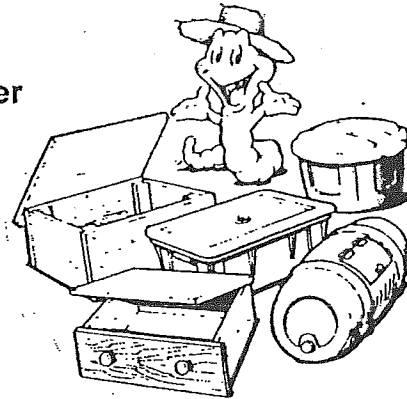
- ✓ Saves you money by lowering garbage bills and replacing store bought soil conditioners
- ✓ Helps garden and house plants by improving the fertility and health of your soil.
- ✓ Saves Water by helping the soil hold moisture and reducing water runoff
- ✓ Benefits the environment by recycling valuable organic resources and extending the life of our landfills

WORM COMPOSTING

- Lots of fun -Little time and effort
- Very compact – Indoors or outdoors
- Produces small amounts of excellent fertilizer

Getting Started:

- I. **CHOOSE A BIN.** Buy a bin or build one out of Wood, plastic, an old dresser drawer, shopping crate or barrel.

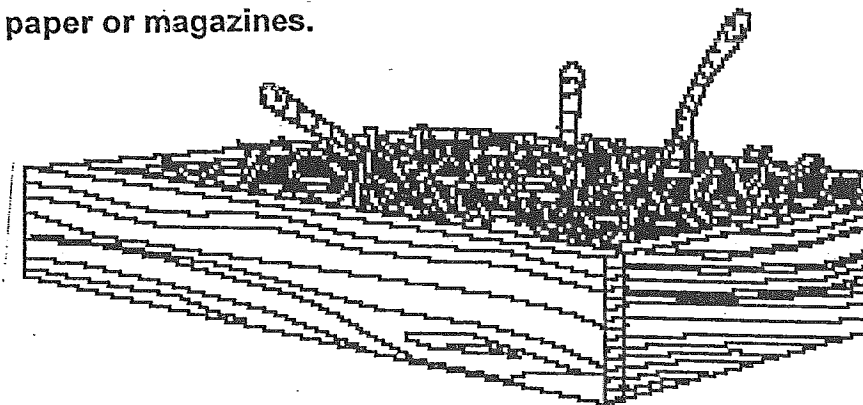


WHAT KIND OF BIN?

Your bin needs to be 10" to 16" deep, have a snug fitting lid, and holes in the bottom or sides for ventilation to keep rodents out. The holes need to be $\frac{1}{4}$ " or smaller. The rule of thumb for bin size is two square feet of surface area per person. An average two person household would need a bin about 2'x2' = 4 sq. feet, or two bins that are 1'x2' = 2 sq. feet each.

- II. **PICK A PLACE.** Locate your bin where it will not freeze or overheat—in a pantry, kitchen corner, laundry room, garage, basement, patio, deck or in your garden.

- III. **MAKE A WORM BED.** Worms like to live under lots of moist paper or leaves. This helps keep them cool and moist, gives them fiber to eat, and prevents fruit flies from getting to the food. To make a worm bed tear black and white newspaper into one inch strips, fluff them up then moisten them so they are as damp as a wrung out sponge. Fill your bin $\frac{3}{4}$ full with this moist "bedding" shredded corrugated cardboard, leaves, compost, sawdust and straw can also be added as bedding. Sprinkle bedding with a few handfuls of soil. **Do not use glossy paper or magazines.**



IV. ADOPT SOME WORMS. Compost worms are often called "red worms" or "red wigglers." They are different from earthworms and night-crawlers who live underground.

You can find red worms in an old compost pile, get them from a friend's worm bin, or buy them from a source listed on the back of this brochure. Start with one half to one pound or two nice big handfuls.



V. FEED WORMS THEIR FIRST MEAL. Start your worms off with about a quart of fruit and vegetable trimmings. Then leave them alone for a couple of weeks while they get used to their new home.



MAINTAINING YOUR WORM BIN

FEED YOUR WORMS about a quart (one pound) of food scraps per square foot of surface area in your bin per week. To avoid fruit flies and odors, always bury food under the bedding. Don't dump and run!

ADD FRESH BEDDING every 1 - 3 months. Always keep a 4" to 6" layer of fresh bedding over the worms and food in your bin.

KEEP BEDDING AS MOIST as a wrung out sponge. In a plastic bin, add dry bedding to absorb excess moisture. Wooden bins may require adding water occasionally.

HARVESTING & USING WORM COMPOST

HARVEST worm compost at least once each year to keep your worms healthy. You can start harvesting 2 - 3 months after you set up your bin. Simply reach in and scoop out the brown crumbly compost, worms and all. You can also move the contents of your bin to one side, place fresh bedding and a handful of soil in the empty space and bury food there for a month or two. Harvest the other side after the worms have migrated to the new food and bedding.

USING WORM COMPOST will help your plants thrive by adding nutrients and humus to the soil.

Sprinkle a 1/4" to 1" layer of base of indoor or outdoor plants or blend no more than 20% worm compost into potting mix or garden soil.



WORM-BIN TROUBLESHOOTING

PROBLEMS	CAUSES	SOLUTIONS
Worms are dying	Food and bedding all eaten	Harvest compost, add fresh bedding and food
	Too dry	Add water until slightly damp
	Extreme Temperatures	Move bin so temperature is between 49 – 80° F
Bin attracts flies and/or smells bad	Food exposed/overfeeding	Add 4" – 6" layer of bedding & stop feeding for 2 – 3 weeks
	Non-compostables present	Remove Meat, pet feces, etc.
Sowbugs, beetles in bin	These are good for your worm compost.....!!

FREE CLASSES

You can attend free or low cost classes on basic composting, worm composting or grass cycling by calling the RECYCLING HOTLINE.

MORE COMPOSTING BROCHURES

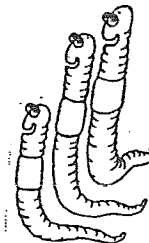
Call the RECYCLING HOT LINE – 1-888-URECYCLE

BOOKS

Worms Eat My Garbage, 1982, Mary Applehoff, Flower Press, Kalamazoo, MI. 100 pp.

WORM SOURCES

Stags Worm Farm – Yermo	(760) 254-2307
Hotzel's Worm Farm – Apple Valley	(760) 247-0812
Return to Nature Worm Farm - Phelan	(760) 868-1932



For compost questions
Mojave Desert & Mountain JPA
RECYCLING HOT LINE 1-888-URECYCLE