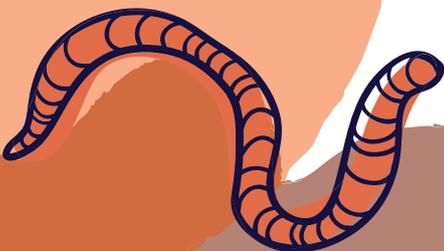


Create Your Own Vermicomposting Bin at Home!

To most people, worms and wriggly creatures conjure up images of gross creepy crawlies, but did you know that they are nature's recyclers and can be used to create free fertilizer and even reduce food waste? Red worms and earthworms in particular are the heroes of worm composting, or vermicomposting – a process where they turn food scraps into nutrient rich fertilizer for plants through digestion. This is not only a great way for you to deal with your leftover organic waste, but will also help decrease the amount of waste sent to the landfills!

Items Required

1. Worm Bin with Cover: If you generate 1/2 pound of food waste each day, get a 2x2 foot bin; If you generate 1 pound of food waste each day, get a 3x3 foot bin with 2 pounds of worms
2. 1 Tray: Put tray under the bin to catch drippings or leakages
3. Drill
4. Shredded Paper: Most people use newspaper because it is convenient and readily available
5. 1 pound of dirt/soil
6. Some Water
7. Worms: The most commonly used worms are Red Wigglers because they are the most efficient in consuming waste, click [here](#) to find out where you can purchase them



Preparing The Bin

Drill 1-inch holes on the top and the bottom of the bin, as well as on the lid in order to provide sufficient air flow for the worms. Don't drill any holes on the sides or the worms will crawl out!

Preparing The Bedding

Shred the newspaper into thin 1-inch wide strips and make sure you have enough to fill your bin 1/3 to 1/2 full. Worms only thrive in moist environments so combine the newspaper, dirt/soil and water to create a damp environment. If you see puddles of water forming or leaking through the bin, you put too much water and risk drowning the worms. If you can, add a bit of fine sand or leaves so the worms will have something gritty to help them ingest the paper and food.

Adding The Worms

To make the worms feel more at home, dig a small hole down the middle of the bedding and place the worms there. Put the lid on and let them adjust to their new home for a few days.

* You can find out *
more composting
information on
[wastefreesd.org!](http://wastefreesd.org)



Adding The Food Scraps

Food scraps such as vegetable and food scraps, crushed egg shells, coffee grounds, cereal and bread can be put into your vermicomposting bin. Feel free to experiment with this to see what your worms like to eat, and adjust the waste items accordingly. Feed the worms around once a week in small amounts (around a cup) so they don't have an excess amount of food which will cause the bin to start smelling. When you feed your worms, make sure to dig a small hole and put more shredded newspaper on the bottom, and add the food scraps on top of the paper. Then cover the hole and scraps with more dirt and moist paper. Imagine you are layering it like a lasagna!

Harvesting The Bin

The easiest way to harvest the bin is to move everything to one side of the bin, then place new moist bedding and food scraps in the empty side of the bin. Leave it alone for a few days until the worms have all mostly moved to the fresh side of the bin, then remove you can remove the composted material. This nutrient rich compost will help your plants grow strong and healthy and also makes wonderful mulch!

Tips

1. Try to only use raw fruit and vegetable scraps, and avoid oily, meaty and citrusy foods - this might attract unwanted pests and takes longer to break down
2. Try to use different types of food scraps and mix it up - this gives the worms more nutrients and thus better compost
3. The bin will only smell if you over-feed the worms as the leftover food starts to rot
4. Place the bins in shady areas, red worms thrive in temperatures between 55-77 degrees Fahrenheit

