

FACT SHEET WORM FARMING



There are many innovative and imaginative ways to construct a worm farm. These instructions focus on setting up and maintaining a domestic multi-tray system however, many of the principles can be applied to a variety of different worm farms.

SETTING UP YOUR WORM FARM



YOU WILL NEED:

- » Worm Farm: we use the 'worm factory' but the same principal applies to a variety of commercially available worm farms
- » Bedding material: this can be either worm castings, coir block soaked in water or a combination of both
- » Compost worms: at least one kilo
- » A worm blanket: hessian bag, old towel or another material that holds moisture but is breathable
- » Container: for catching the worm liquid

GETTING STARTED:

1. Choose a cool, shady location for your worm farm that is easily accessible. Make sure you are happy with your location before assembling as it may be too heavy to move once it's set up.
2. Assemble your worm farm according to the instructions (you won't need your second working tray for several months).
Tip: prop one side of your farm up so the liquid can drain out easily.
3. Place cardboard or newspaper on the base of the first working tray (this has a perforated base). Add chosen bedding material followed by the worms.
4. Ensure the tap is fully open with a container underneath. Pour approximately 4 litres of water over the bedding material and worms.
5. Cover with a worm blanket and allow one or two days before feeding so the worms can settle in.

ADDING ANOTHER TRAY:

6. Add the second working tray when the first tray is almost full.
7. Add a 5cm layer of bedding material to the new tray, top up with a handful of worms and castings taken from your first working tray and continue feeding as required.
8. After several months most of your worms will be in working tray 2. When this tray is almost full you can remove the first tray (bottom tray) and use the castings in your garden. Keep the first tray to one side until the second tray is full of castings and repeat from step 6.

FEEDING AND WATERING YOUR WORMS

After your worms have settled in, their first feed should be approximately 1 cup of food (blended or finely chopped food scraps) for 1 kilo of worms. This might not seem much but it is better to underfeed than over feed your worms. You will be able to increase this amount once your worms settle in and their numbers increase.

TIP: Worms don't have any teeth, they suck their food in. The smaller the food particles, the more your worms can eat. Chop, blend or freeze then thaw your worm food and feed small amounts regularly.

Any food scraps you feed your worms must be buried in the worm farm. If you are feeding your worms mostly food scraps, add a small handful of garden lime once a fortnight and some shredded newspaper. This will reduce the acidity.

Water the farm with 1-2 litres of water from a watering can or sprayer attachment on a hose to keep it moist at all times. You will need to observe your farm to judge the exact frequency and amount of watering required.

TIP: you may need to water your worms daily in summer and less than once per week in winter. Check them daily and get to know what makes them happy. Worms die if they get too hot and may require frozen water bottles or ice blocks to keep them cool on the hottest summer days.



WORMS LOVE		WORMS HATE
» Teabags	» Veggie scraps	» Citrus peel
» Coffee grounds	» Straw	» Onion
» Leftovers (raw and cooked)	» Garden scraps	» Garlic
» Natural Fibre clothing	» Lawn clippings	» Dairy
» Animal manures*	» Paper and tissues	» Meat
	» Human and animal hair	

*Avoid putting pet poo in your worm farm. In-ground worm feeding stations are the best and safest way to feed pet poo to your worms - see our Fact Sheet on this at www.vincent.wa.gov.au/green



Problem	Likely Cause	Solution
Smelly worm farm	Excess of food and not enough aeration	Stop adding food, sprinkle some lime and gently aerate your farm by turning over the top layer
Vinegar flies	These are harmless but caused by an excess of food	Reduce the amount of food to your worm farm
Ants	Bedding material is too dry or acidic	Add water and lime and ensure food is buried. Stand the legs of your farm in containers of water with a few drops of kerosene/metho
Escaping worms	The odd worm on the lid or in the corners of your farm is fine. If there are masses of worms then there may be problem with the bedding material	Inspect and monitor moisture and food levels. Add a little lime and gently aerate your farm
Worms in the bottom liquid tray	Usually caused by high temperatures	On hot days add a layer of newspaper soaked in water and consider adding ice blocks or frozen water bottles as well in extreme temperatures. Avoid adding manures and fresh grass clippings as these produce heat as they break down.

