

D.I.Y. Worm Farm

This factsheet provides information about D.I.Y. Worm Farm ideas on how to create your own at home.

Worms are clever little critters that will devour your fruit and veggie scraps, leftover cardboard and even cavum cleaner dust to make rich fertiliser for your garden. Follow these simple steps to make your very own farm out of polystyrene boxes.

Getting Started

Before constructing your worm farm, you will need to purchase about 1000 compost worms to get your farm started. Also, try to think of a cool shady location where your worms can prosper (this could even be inside).

What will you need?

- 2 x polystyrene boxes with lids the same size (broccoli boxes are best);
- a strip of insect screen, net curtain or similar to fit into the bottom of one box;
- a 'Cor-peat brick' (expanding using the instructions on the pack) or; a bucket of compost mixed with shredded newspaper, mulch and /or sand;
- water;
- 1000 composting worms.

Note: Composting worms are not the same as ordinary earthworms. You will need to purchase composting worms from a garden centre. Alternatively, if you know someone with worm farm, take a handful of their compost worms to kick start your system.

Worm farm assembly

Step 1:

Take your polystyrene boxes and place them on the ground in the shade or inside. Use a pen or screwdriver to make approximately one small

drainage hole per square inch in the bottom of one (1) box (this will become the top box where your worms will live). Take the second box and make a final larger drainage hole in one end.

The 'worm wee' will drain from the top box into the bottom box and then out of the drainage hold in the bottom box into a collection container.

Step 2:

To stop the worms from falling through the drainage holes, spread insect screen or net curtain inside the bottom of the top box. The insect screen still allows the 'worm wee' to pass through. Put a 10cm thick layer of expanded coir-peat (or compost mix) on the base of the top box.

TIP: Water this layer gently and frequently to keep it moist, correct moisture levels will help your worms digest all the scraps you add to your worm farm.

Step 3:

Now it is time to add the compost worms to your farm. Make sure you place a moist layer of newspaper, hessian sack or old carpet over the worms to keep the farm dark, cool and moist. Keep the lid on the box whenever you are not using it. The lid helps to keep moisture in and light out.

Step 4:

Once your worms have settled in, you can begin feeding them. Make sure you don't over feed them. To test how much food you should be placing in the farm, put a small amount in one corner underneath damp cover and see how long it takes for the worms to consume it. Place the food scraps in a different spot each time until you are aware of the rate to feed your worms. As your worms multiply, they will be able to eat more food.

What to feed your worms

Your worms will eat most of your fruit and vegetable scraps, but there are a few things they would rather avoid. Just remember, the smaller the food is the quicker your worms will eat it. You can chop or blend food before feeding your worms.

Feed your worms any of these foods

- Fruit peelings;
- vegetable scraps and peelings;
- coffee grounds and tea bags;
- crushed egg shells; shredded paper and sawdust;
- hair clippings or fur;
- vacuum cleaner dust;
- soaked or shredded cardboard.

Do not feed your worms any of these foods

- Meat, poultry, fish or bones;
- dairy-protein attracts rodents;
- potato chips, lollies, oils – worms do not like junk food and these attract ants;
- oranges, lemons, limes – citrus has a chemical substance (limonene) that is toxic to worms.

Reaping the rewards

Over time your worms will start to produce a liquid known as 'worm tea' or 'worm wee', which will collect and drain from the bottom box of your worm farm. This liquid can be used as a natural fertiliser for your garden. Simply collect the 'wee' and dilute it by adding water so that it ends up the colour of weak tea. Then pour into your plants every couple of weeks.

If you are not getting much worm wee from your farm, pour some water from a watering can over the worms. The worms will love the dampness and, providing the drainage holes are free from obstructions, the water will wash the goodness into your bottom collection box giving you a fantastic natural liquid fertiliser to use on your garden.

After a few months, a layer of worm castings will build up in the bottom of the top box. If you set up a new box on top, and transfer the worms across into it, you can empty out the castings and spread these over your garden just like compost. The plants will love it.

Further Information?

You can contact Council for further information in any of the following ways:

- ✉ South Burnett Regional Council
PO Box 336
KINGAROY QLD 4610
- ☎ (07) 4189 9100
- @ info@sbrc.qld.gov.au
- 👤 Visiting a Customer Service Centre