

Congratulations!

Your new wiggly, very productive worm pets will reward you for years to come. With just a minimum of care, you will

- ◆ Reduce food scraps going to the landfill
- ◆ Produce organic fertilizer that is high in nutrients, minerals and vitamins—fast!
- ◆ Grow worms to share with other composters

Care and Feeding

Where to Keep your Bin:

- ◆ Keep your worm bin out of the hot sun and heavy rain, in a sheltered location (garage, basement, under cover).
- ◆ Worms tolerate temperatures between 40°F and 80°F—70° is ideal.

What to Feed:

Food scraps:

- ◆ Fruits (NO CITRUS), vegetables, coffee, filters, teabags, eggshells, etc. Avoid meats and oils. Chop scraps as small as possible.

Edible Bedding:

- ◆ Aged—composted leaves
- ◆ Paper—shredded newspaper, cardboard, egg cartons, TP rolls, napkins, Kleenex, etc.
- ◆ Worm bedding is multipurpose: It provides a home for your worms with necessary air and moisture as well as food and nutrients.

How much to Feed:

- ◆ Your Tote Worm Bin supports up to 1 pound of redworms which can eat ½ pound of food waste per day or about 3 pounds per week.
- ◆ Under ideal conditions worms can handle up to 1 gallon of food per week.
- ◆ Feed less during cold spells and hot days or if food is not decomposing.

When to Feed:

- ◆ 1X per week

How to Feed:

- ◆ When feeding, pull back bedding and make sure the food from the last feeding is being worked by worms.
- ◆ Place food scraps on one half side of the bin at a time. Do not stir your bin. When feeding, use a layered approach: apply scraps to 1 side and cover; next time, apply to the other side and cover; repeat.
- ◆ Cover with bedding (add more if needed).
- ◆ Top the bin off with a newspaper blanket or piece of cardboard (optional).

BONUS: Drop off worms at Heritage Farm MCR shed and get 4 MCR payback hours for harvesting and sharing a pound of worms (approximately both hands full of worms)



Harvesting Your Worm Fertilizer

When to Harvest:

- ◆ Best done during warm weather periods, after 3-6 months, and when your bin compost has grown towards the top of your bin.
- ◆ With proper feeding you should be able to harvest your bin 1-2X a year (approx. 10 gallons of worm castings per harvest).
- ◆ Periodically drain the liquid leachate from the worm bin. It can be captured in a used milk jug or other container until you are ready to use it.

How to Harvest:

STEP 1: Scoop off the top 3-5 inches of material. This is the active layer with the most recent food/bedding and will have most of the worms in it. Set this aside to start your bin again. Or, if you have an active worm population, you can divide your worms at this time.

- Place the excess worm population in a container filled with bedding and some decomposed material from your worm bin. Either cover the container with a lid with air holes or a moist blanket of paper.

STEP 2: Dump out the rest. This is your nutrient-rich, plant-ready black worm castings fertilizer!

- At this point, you can spread it around your garden (some worms are ok and will be released).
- Or, you can store it in a bucket or container with a damp newspaper blanket on top until you are ready to use it. Note: You either can bait* the worms to remove them or leave them to decompose and become part of the worm fertilizer.
- *Bait: 1/2 cantelope, flesh-side down and/or a piece of soggy bread.

Using your Worm Fertilizer—A little goes a long way!

- ◆ 1 gallon will feed a 4' by 8' garden bed
- ◆ Add up to 30% to potting mixes
- ◆ Top dress houseplants
- ◆ Sprinkle in planting holes, rows, etc.

