

Solving Worm Farm Problems?



My worm farm smells!

Worm farms may smell if the worms are being overfed or the worm farm is too wet

Solution: Stop feeding the worms until most of the food has been eaten. Once eaten add smaller quantities of food. Adding extra newspaper will also assist in removing the smell.

My worms aren't breeding!

Worms need certain conditions to breed. They need:

- The right temperature, the right food & the right amount of moisture.
- Worms like a cool environment away from direct sunlight.
- No sugary foods or grains. Adding these foods create acidic conditions within the farm and the worms will not breed.

Solution: If the worm farm is too acidic add a sprinkling of lime, wood ash or dolomite every few weeks until fixed.

I have other insects in my worm farm!

You may see other insects in your worm farm. These will not harm your worms but they may be unwelcome.

Removing Ants: If your worm farm sits on legs place these in bowls of water to stop the ants crawling in. If not place the flat bottom of the worm farm on a few bricks and sit these in a tray of water.

Removing Cockroaches: Keep the food in the worm farm covered with either newspaper or a hessian bag. Remember to keep the lid on.

Removing Vinegar Flies: These indicate that the worm farm is too acidic. Add a sprinkling of lime, dolomite or wood ash.

Interesting Facts about Worms

- ① There are over 350 species of worms in Australia
- ① Worms are hermaphrodites (they have both male & female organs)
- ① Worms can live up to 15 years
- ① Worms breed every 7-10 days and the population will double in approximately 2-3 months
- ① Eggs hatch in approximately 21 days
- ① There are 2-20 baby worms in each egg or cocoon
- ① In 2-3 months the young worms are ready to breed
- ① Compost worms eat half their body weight in food in one day
- ① Worms sense vibrations, light and temperature through organs in their skin plus they breathe through their skin
- ① Worms have no legs but they do have bristles around their body that help them move



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Household Worm Farming Guide



Organic waste, such as fruit and vegetable scraps, make up about one third of the average household's waste. This waste can easily be diverted from landfill by using a worm farm. Worm farming is a great alternative to composting and is ideal for those people who don't have enough room to compost but still want to minimise their waste. If you live in a unit put one on your balcony or in the laundry.



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Getting Started

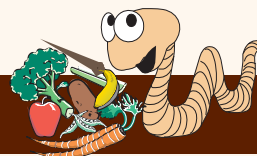
Worm farming is easy. You can purchase a commercial worm farm and follow the manufacturer's set up instructions or build your own following these simple steps:

- ✓ You will need a box or container for your worms - plastic crates or polystyrene fruit boxes are perfect.
- ✓ Punch some holes in the bottom for drainage.
- ✓ Raise the box so any liquid will run into a smaller container placed underneath the worm farm. Dilute the liquid fertiliser and use to water your garden.
- ✓ Line your container with newspaper.
- ✓ Place a bedding of shredded newspaper mixed with potting soil, coconut fibre and peat moss in the container to a depth of about 10cm.
- ✓ Add your worms. About one thousand worms is a good number to start with.
- ✓ Worms don't like light so cover your worms with some damp newspaper or damp hessian.
- ✓ Start feeding your worms once they have been in their new home for about a week.



Keeping Your Worm Farm Healthy

- ✓ Worms don't like to get hot. Place your worm farm in a cool, shaded position.
- ✓ Worms eat food waste like vegetable and fruit peelings (cut into small pieces), tea bags and egg shells.
- ✓ Worms need moisture. It is important to keep your worm farm damp (like a well rung out sponge) but not wet. If it becomes too wet it may start to smell 'sour'.
- ✓ Fluff up the castings with a small garden fork and add a handful of dolomite to raise the pH of the castings.
- ✓ Be careful not to overfeed your worms. Add small amounts of food to your farm every few days.



Menu

Worms will eat a variety of food. Please see the list below for what they will and will not eat.

YES

- ✓ All fruit (including the peel & seeds) except citrus.
- ✓ All vegetables except those listed opposite.
- ✓ Tea bags & leaves
- ✓ Coffee grounds
- ✓ Egg shell (crushed)
- ✓ Paper (shredded or torn)
- ✓ Hair

NO

- ✗ Oranges, lemons, limes & grapefruit
- ✗ Tomatoes, onions
- ✗ Raw potato
- ✗ Garlic or chilli
- ✗ Grains or bread
- ✗ Rice or pasta
- ✗ Meat, fish or chicken
- ✗ Bones or oil
- ✗ Dairy products
- ✗ Sugar or lollies

Harvesting Your Worm Castings

Harvest the worm castings by following the following simple steps.

1. Tip worms onto some sheets of newspaper.
2. Make a pyramid out of the castings. Because the worms do not like light they will burrow to the base of your pyramid.
3. Wait 30 minutes then scrape the castings off the top of the pyramid and use them in your garden.
4. Return your worms to your farm and keep feeding them.
5. Use your castings as a fertiliser on your garden or combine with potting mix and use to plant seedlings.



Please remember!

- Don't add too much food at once
- The smaller the food is chopped the quicker the worms will be able to eat it
- Worms do not have teeth, they can only suck & rasp their food
- Keep the worm farm in a cool, dry place away from direct sunlight
- Keep the worm farm moist but not too wet

