

# Compost your Food Scraps with a Worm Bin!

*Worm bins are a fantastic way to reduce the amount of waste you send to the landfill, and instead make fantastic soil called compost! They are low maintenance, educational and very cool !*

## Materials:

- \_ 2 dark plastic bins with lids (Rubbermaid 32 gallon bins work great)
- \_ small sheet of window screen
- \_ tin can
- \_ small bucket of water
- \_ newspaper
- \_ duct tape
- \_ scissors
- \_ utility knife
- \_ 1lb of red wiggler worms (*eisinea fetida*) – *found at most fishing shops, or from an existing worm composter*



## Build your bin:

- 1) Grab your two plastic bins that are dark in color that have lids. One will actually house your worms, and the other will help keep things tidy.
- 2) Have an adult cut 8-12 holes about an inch below the top of the bin that will house your worms. Make the holes about a square inch in size, on all sides of the bin.
- 3) Cut window screen and duct tape it on the inside of these holes.
- 4) Drill 20-30 small holes on the bottom of the bin so that moisture can drip out of your worm bin, and into your “tidy” bin.
- 5) With a permanent marker mark the corners of your bin with numbers 1-4, you will put food in a different corner each week, coming back to corner one at the beginning of each month.
- 6) Place a block or tin can in the “tidy bin” to help keep the two bins separated when nested inside one another.

## Prepare the bin for your worms!

Take your newspaper, and tear from the top, strips of paper around an inch wide.

Dip these strips of paper in your water, then put them in the worm bin. The strips of paper should be about as wet as a wrung out sponge, so if your bin is too wet, mix in some dry strips of paper. Fill the bin  $\frac{3}{4}$  full with shredded paper. You can also add some leaves from your yard if you want, although this can sometimes provide more pests in your bin.

## Add your worms!

The worms will quickly wiggle down into their new home in your newsprint. Toss your lid on top, the other lid can go beneath your bins.

## Feed your worms! *(also see the yummy / yuck guide on the other side of this sheet)*

For the first 2-3 weeks while your bin is getting started, add a few handfuls of fruit and vegetable waste to your bin once each week. Place it at the bottom of the bin, beneath the newsprint. Start in corner 1, and each week, feed in a different corner. When you come back to corner 1 in a month, all the food should be gone. If its not, the worms may not like that food, or you may have added too much to the bin. If all the food was eaten, you can add a little more waste each week to your bin. Usually, a bin of this size can eat about 32 ounces of food per week, roughly the size of a large yogurt container. Freezing your scraps before feeding them to the worms can prevent pests, and also helps the worms eat the food faster. The smaller the size of the food the faster it will break down, so cut large items into pieces no larger than an inch in diameter. Feed your bin weekly. Dump out any liquids that have dripped into your tidy bin out on the lawn, it will help it grow. Don't feed this liquid to your veggies, as your worms may not have processed this liquid.

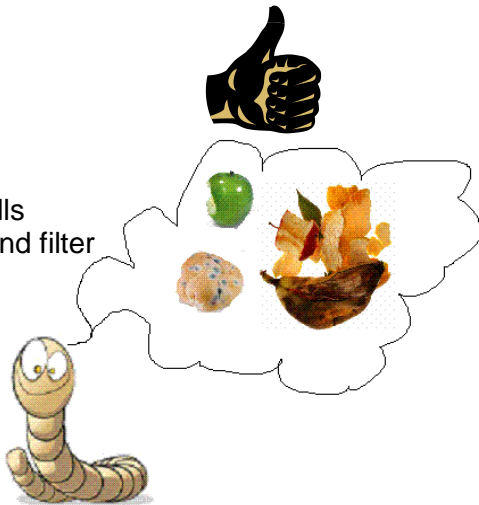
**Location of your bin:** A screened worm bin can be kept inside or outside Spring-Fall. The best place is a place that stays between 60-80°F, not in the direct sun, and also not in a place that vibrates a lot.

# Wiggler Worms'

# Yummy and Yucky Foods

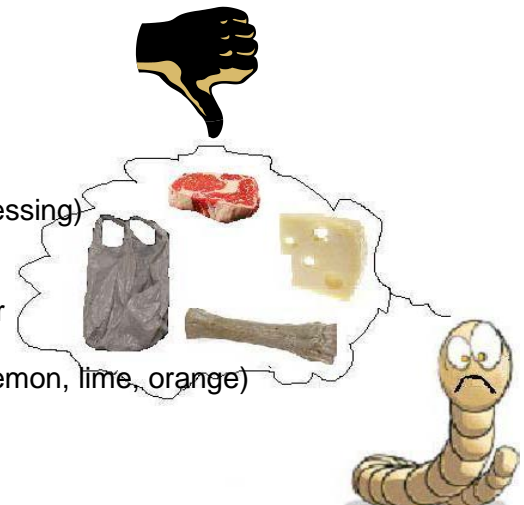
## Yummy!

Fruits  
Vegetables  
Crushed egg shells  
Coffee grounds and filter  
Tea bags  
Newspaper  
Leaves  
Junk Mail  
Hot peppers



## Yucky

Fats (greasy foods)  
Dairy (milk, cheese)  
Oils (mayo, salad dressing)  
Bones  
Meat, Poultry, Fish  
Glossy colored paper  
Salt  
Highly acidic fruits (lemon, lime, orange)



## Troubleshooting:

If you provide your worms with the proper food water and shelter, you shouldn't run into too many problems, but in case you do, here's a guide to help you out:

Symptom	Diagnosis	Remedy
The bin stinks!	Not Enough Air Circulation	- Fluff the bedding - Make sure the air holes in the bin are not clogged with compost or bedding
	Too Much Food in the bin	- Reduce the quantity of food you are feeding the worms - Feed the worms less often
	Worms won't eat that.	Get rid of meat, dairy, oily stuff.
	The food is exposed	Bury the food completely beneath the bedding
	Anaerobic conditions	Put in some more bedding to absorb the moisture
Fruit Flies	The food is exposed	Bury the food completely beneath the bedding
	Too Much Food in the bin	Reduce the quantity of food you are feeding the worms
	The spoiled food is infested with larvae	Freeze, then thaw the food before feeding to worms
Ant Infestation		- Immerse the bottom of the bin in water an inch or so deep. - Put a barrier of chalk or petroleum jelly near the bottom of the sides of the worm bin. - Is the bedding dry? Add some water.
Mite Infestation		Try to avoid adding lots of foods with high moisture content, such as fruits and vegetables.
Overly Moist	Too much water added to the bedding	Reduce the water you are adding, and in the meantime, put in some extra bedding.
	Too much food added with high moisture content	Put in less fruit and vegetable waste... add more dry waste like coffee grounds and egg shells, or more bedding