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## WORM FARMING BASICS

Worm farming is a simple and effective way to recycle kitchen waste and turn it into something useful for the garden.



Compost worms help break down food scraps by eating the bacteria that grows on decomposing organic matter.

The end result is nutrient-rich worm castings and liquid worm tea, both of which are wonderful for helping plants grow.



### Important Note!

Garden worms and compost worms are not the same. Garden worms do a different job in the soil and are not suitable for a worm farm. Compost worms are the best choice because they thrive in food-rich environments and work quickly to break down organic waste.





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## Why Worm Farming Is Great

Worm farming is a simple way to turn kitchen scraps into something useful instead of sending them to landfill. It helps reduce waste, supports healthy gardens, and teaches children how nature recycles and reuses organic matter in clever and important ways.



With the help of compost worms, food scraps can be transformed into rich soil and natural plant food - a wonderful example of nature at work.

### Interesting facts about worms:

- Worms like to live in a cool, dark, moist place
- They have no eyes and five hearts!
- If a worm is cut in half, it does not become two worms
- Worms can live for an average of up to 5 years
- Worms are self-regulating and will not overpopulate their environment
- Worms are hermaphrodites, which means each worm has both male and female reproductive organs
- Worms are most comfortable in temperatures between 10°C and 24°C
- Worms lay eggs, and 6 to 10 baby worms can hatch from each egg capsule





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## Setting up your worm farm

Worms need the right environment to stay healthy and happy.



Place your worm farm in a **cool, shaded area**. Worms do not like heat, and even a little direct sun can make the worm farm too hot.

Worms enjoy a **dark and moist environment**, so it is a good idea to keep a layer of Damp newspaper, Hessian, Cardboard or Old carpet on top of the food waste.

This encourages the worms to come up to the surface to feed and helps keep the farm moist and dark.

Worms will eventually eat some of this layer, so it will need to be replaced as necessary.

Worms breed quickly and can **double their population every 3 months**, so once your farm is thriving, you may even be able to share worms with other new worm farmers!



## Feeding your worms

Worms love kitchen scraps, but they need to be fed the right way.

- Place food scraps **directly** onto the bedding or soil
- **Cover** the food scraps with the damp newspaper, cardboard, hessian, or carpet layer
- Feed only when the previous food is **almost gone**
- Feeding **once a week** is usually enough

Worms can eat approximately half their body weight in food each day, but it is important not to overfeed them.

### Handy tip:

If you are adding potato peelings, try freezing them first and then defrosting them before feeding.

This helps soften them and makes them easier for the worms to eat.





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## Worm castings

As worms eat food scraps, they produce worm castings - also known as **worm poo**.



These castings may look and feel like mud or, they may be dry and crumbly.

## When are castings ready?

Your worm farm will usually be ready to harvest **after about one year**, when it is full of castings. They are ready to use when they are **a rich, dark colour** and crumbly and soil-like in texture.

## How to harvest castings:

- Expose the worm farm to the sun for a short time
- The worms will move down away from the light
- Gently scrape off the top layer of castings



## How to use worm castings:

- Mixing equal parts castings and garden soil to make a nutrient-rich potting mix
- Digging castings into the top 4-6 inches of soil in garden beds
- Adding castings to established garden beds, while keeping them away from plant stems

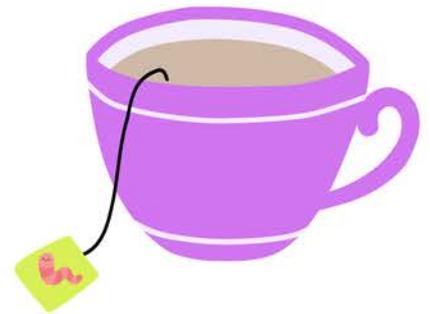




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## Worm Tea

Worm farms produce a liquid called worm tea, which can be used as a **natural fertiliser**.



### How to collect it:

You can leave the tap on and a bucket underneath or simply turn the tap on once a week to collect your worm tea.

### How to use it:

Before using worm tea on your plants, **dilute it** using a ratio of one part worm tea to 10 parts water. You can then use it to **feed your plants** every 2 to 4 weeks. Worm tea is a great natural alternative to store-bought fertilisers.





# Troubleshooting your worm farm

## If your worm farm smells

A healthy worm farm should not smell bad. If it does, it may be **too wet** or **you may be overfeeding**. Try mixing in some dry materials, such as brown lawn clippings, crushed dry leaves or shredded paper.

## If you see fruit flies

Fruit flies can be a sign that there is **too much food** in the worm farm. Try reducing the amount you feed and make sure scraps are covered well. To help get rid of fruit flies, you can add about 2 lidfuls of apple cider vinegar nearby or into a trap, and they should reduce within a few days.

## Foods to avoid

When feeding your worms avoid adding **Bread, Citrus, Onions, Chilli, Garlic, and Oils**. These foods can upset the balance of the worm farm and may make it smelly or attract pests.



**Need help?**  
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