

Dinner time: *Don't dump and run!*

Lift the bedding, spread the scraps and cover them back with the bedding. The bedding will keep the worms moist but most importantly will prevent smell, mold and flies. Feed only lightly the first week then feed every other day beginning with 1 cup per pound of worms. You may choose to feed them more but not as often. Red Wigglers are surface feeders and will only eat the top 3-5 inches of material in your bin. Be careful how much you give to your new friends. If you give more than they can eat, the extra food might start heating up and your worms won't like that. It is better to underfeed them than overfeed. Remember that they can always eat the newspaper.



Harvest and celebrate!

Your worm bin should be ready to harvest in about two to three months. Harvesting should be done at least once a year to keep the worms healthy.

Trouble shooting

Smell: too much food, stop feeding for a while

Flies: Add new bedding on top of the kitchen scraps

Worms are climbing out: Uncover your box and keep a direct light on the worms for a few hours. The worms will burrow down by themselves.

Do's

Soft fruits and vegetables (*banana peels, apple cores, grapes, salad, cooked soft vegetables, etc.*)

Crushed eggshells

Tea bags and coffee ground

Don't

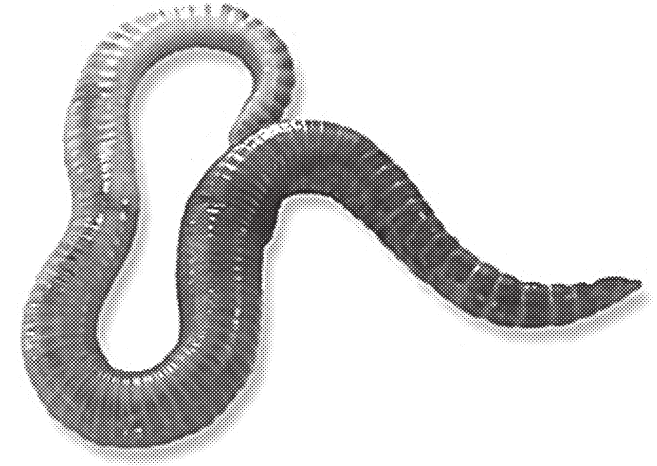
Meat or bones (*attracts rats*)

Bread (*may cause mold*)

Fatty food

Diary (*attracts mice*) 

Hard vegetables (*such as raw carrots which are hard to eat*)



The Beautiful Life of the Red Wigglers

(*Eisenia fetida*)

Composting is nature's way of recycling. It is a great way to turn fruits and vegetables from the kitchen into a dark and crumbly soil fertilizer. Worms are great decomposers and they are fun to watch. They help produce a rich compost in a faster way. Worm composting is easy to start. Once started the worm box can be used for many years to come. The worms have babies regularly as long as they are fed and properly maintained.

Design by Klotz Design Studio

GREEN VILLAGE INITIATIVE
Ridgefield

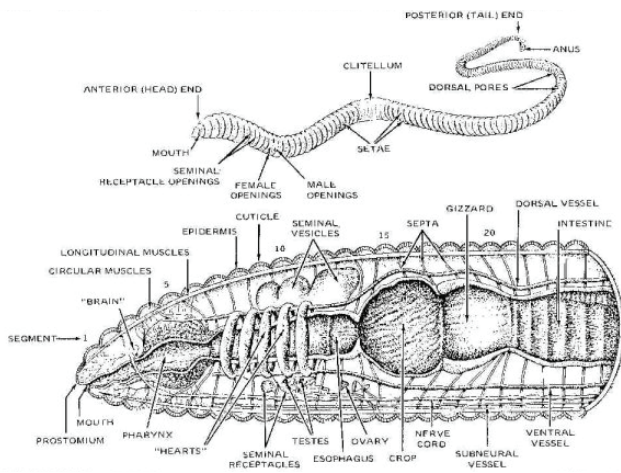


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GREEN VILLAGE INITIATIVE



A little biology about worms

- Worms need a moist environment. Moisture protects their delicate skin and it allows them to breathe.
- Worms don't have lungs but they breathe through their skin.
- Worms need air. The worm box needs to have enough holes to allow proper ventilation and drainage.
- Worms are light sensitive. They don't have eyes but they can feel the light. Keeping them in a dark environment such as a dark plastic box with a fitted lid is the best.
- They don't have teeth. Adding a handful of fine sand will help them grind their food.
- Their ideal temperature is 50°F to 70°F. Too hot or too cold and they will die. Keeping them in your garage is probably the best option.
- Worms have five tiny hearts. Don't cut them in half or they will die!

The best bedding in town

- Starting bed should be at least 4 inches deep. Use soaked strips of newspaper. The bedding should be moistened to a "firm ball" stage. When squeeze only droplets of water will fall (*not stream*) and when released it will form a ball. Fluff it up before adding to the bedding.
- Add one handful of sand.
- Add a handful of crushed eggshell for calcium and increased reproduction.



Alternative harvesting techniques

- Always add food on the same side of the bin. After a few weeks, all the worms will migrate to the food and you will be able to harvest the other side.
- Place a piece of window screen over the worm bedding (*make sure that there are holes big enough for the worm to go through*). Then place fresh bedding on top of the screen and begin feeding the worms on top of the second layer. The worms will squeeze through the screen to reach the food. After a few months, take hold of the screen edges and lift it out. Harvest the casting that are below the screen. Then move the newer composting material on top of the screen into the empty bin and replace the screen on top.
- Place a plastic linen outside. Dump your box content on it. The worms will go deep into the pile to stay away from the light to stay moist. Wait an hour or so. Harvest the top portion of the pile. Replace the bottom portion of the pile in the bin and add fresh bedding.

Adding castings to your soil

The worms castings are full of live micro-organisms, plant growth hormones and micro nutrients. Add 1 part of worm castings to 9 parts of soil and make sure to mix the casting with your soil. This addition will insure an increase in plant growth and in root mass and a better health for your plants and vegetables.