

Tip:

While worm farms can be an excellent way to reduce the amount of organic waste going into landfill, worm farm productivity can vary. Peak activity will occur during warmer periods while in winter, activity will slow. It may also take several months before your worm population is working at optimal performance.



FAQs

How many worms do I need to start a worm farm?

A thousand worms is the ideal number required to start your worm population. Eventually, given the correct food and conditions, this number will increase to around 6000 worms.

Why is my worm farm smelly?

A healthy worm farm should never smell bad. If your worm farm is starting to smell, it is probably because there is an excess of food scraps that are starting to rot as your worms can't keep up. Consider reducing the amount of food scraps being added. Also try cutting large chunks into smaller pieces.

Why are there flies in my worm farm?

Vinegar flies will be attracted to your worm farm if the conditions are too acidic. Sprinkling garden lime powder over the food scraps as needed which can help regulate the pH level of the worm farm and create conditions unfavourable to these flies.

Why is my worm farm wet and sludgy?

A wet and sludgy worm farm indicates an overuse of kitchen waste high in nitrogen. By adding some carbon to your worm



farm - such as shredded paper, cardboard or dry leaves - you will be able to reduce some of the moisture.

How do I stop bugs and ants getting into my worm farm? Are they bad?

Your worm farm is a miniature ecosystem with a variety of organisms. Each one will have a role to play in the process of breaking down the organic matter. Most are harmless to your worm farm. Add garden lime powder to reduce vinegar flies and keep your worm farm moist to prevent ants.

Why are my worms escaping?

Often worms will move up into the lid before it rains. In nature this migration takes them above flood level and prevents them from drowning. Move the worm farm out of the rain, take the worms out of the lid and replace them in the bedding. If worms amass in a ball, this is sign of stress and you should consider reviewing the health of your worm farm.

What can I do with the castings and worm juice?

The castings and liquid from worm farms make excellent fertiliser for your garden. The castings can be mixed straight into your soil. The liquid needs to be diluted at around 2 parts water to one part worm juice.

A Guide to Worm Farming



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Why should you use worms?

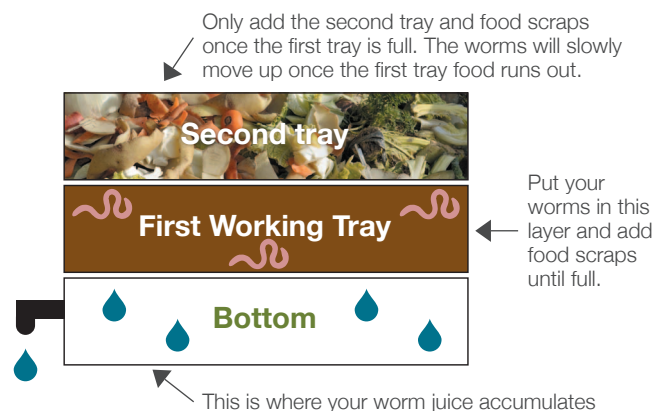
Did you know that your average household bin contains more than 25% kitchen organics? A worm farm is a great way to reduce organic food waste by converting your kitchen scraps into nutrient-rich fertiliser for your garden.

Things that you need

- A worm farm
- A minimum of 1000 worms
- Hessian or newspaper to retain moisture
- Food scraps
- Compost/bedding block (usually sold with worm farm)
- Garden lime powder



Layers of a typical worm farm



How do I set up my worm farm?

1. Find an appropriate location for your worm farm. Worms like to be kept warm in winter and cool in summer, generally tolerating temperatures between 10–30°C. Inside a garage or shed is perfect, but under a tree or in a shaded and protected area in your backyard is also good.
2. Place your worm farm on a flat, firm base.
3. Add your worms to the first tray. Include some organic material or compost if your worms did not come with bedding material. Keep them moist. Note that commercially farmed worms are more efficient eaters than garden worms.
4. Cover your worms with wet newspaper or hessian to keep the farm moist.
5. Feed your worms small amounts at first until they settle in.

What can worms eat?

✓ Yes

Fruit, vegetable scraps, tea bags, coffee grinds, crushed egg shells, small amounts of shredded paper/newspaper, small amounts of bread, rice and pasta.

✗ No

Citrus fruits (lemons, limes and oranges), garlic, onion, chilli, dairy, meat, bones, fish, oils, pet faeces.

Don't forget that worms have small mouths, so remember to cut up your food scraps into small pieces.

