

Vermicompost—Composting with Worms

(Vermicompost is feeding kitchen waste to worms to produce fertilizer)

Types of worms:

- Night Crawlers
- Earth Worms
- Red Wigglers

Red worm characteristics:

- Eats half its weight daily
- Nocturnal
- Vegetarian

Where to get worms:

- Stores
- Online
- Friends
- One pound equals about 1,000 adult worms

Where to keep worms:

- Commercial bins (stackable)
- Plastic storage bins
- Wooden bins
- Note: all bins should be opaque and ventilated

Where to keep bins:

Keep in shade where temperature remains between 68 and 77 degrees Fahrenheit

Worm bedding:

- Shredded paper, six inches thick
- Moist, but not wet
- Ventilated - avoid paper matting



Do feed worms:

- Vegetable and fruit skin, rind and scraps
- Bread, grain and pasta
- coffee grounds, filters, and tea bags
- Crushed egg shells

Don't feed worms:

- Meat, fish, or bones
- Dairy products
- Oily food like peanut butter
- Pet waste or cat litter
- Excessive citrus (less than 1/5 of total)

Harvesting Fertilizer:

- Drain off liquid "tea" and dilute before using
- Separate worms from castings. Mix castings with soil

Benefits:

- Keeps 200 pounds per household of waste out of landfills per year
- Worm castings (manure) and tea (liquid) are excellent fertilizers



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Agriculture and Natural Resources

UC Master Gardener Program
Ventura County