

## GETTING STARTED . . .

Only a few things are **needed** to make good worm compost: a bin, bedding, worms, and organic kitchen wastes.

## WEIGH KITCHEN WASTES

Weigh kitchen wastes for 2 weeks to determine what size worm bin you will need.

**Kitchen Wastes** include vegetable and fruit waste:



banana peels,  
salad scraps,  
tea bags, coffee  
grounds & filter,  
citrus,  
used napkins,  
cereal, and plant  
leaves, etc.

Basically, anything organic that would go into an outdoor compost bin. *Bones, fat and meat wastes are not recommended.*

- For 3.5 lbs of garbage/week you need 1 lb worms and a small bin.
- For 7 lbs of garbage/week you need 2 lbs worms and a large bin.
- Experiment with old wooden boxes, galvanized or plastic tubs. Drill holes for adequate ventilation.

Worms are surface feeders so bins do not need to be deep. The rule of thumb for bin size is two square feet of surface area per person, or one square foot of surface area per pound of food waste per week.

## BUILD WORM BIN

**2' X 2' X 8" bin for 1 or 2 people.**

**1' X 2' X 3' bin for 4 to 6 people.**

**MATERIALS:** 5/8 " CDX Plywood or Scrap Lumber, nails, ½" bit.

Nail sides together, overlapping the corners. Nail the bottom to the sides. Drill 9+ ½" holes in the bottom for aeration and drainage. Place the bin on blocks to allow air to circulate underneath. Place on a plastic sheet. Worms don't crawl out but compost will fall out. **COVER** with a wooden lid or black plastic. A carpet remnant will also work.



## BEDDING

**MACHINE SHREDDED PAPER**

**HAND SHREDDED NEWSPRINT**

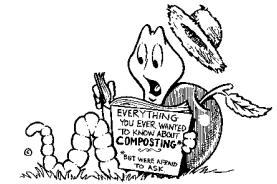
**COMPOSTED HORSE, RABBIT  
or COW MANURE**

**LEAF MOLD or PEAT MOSS.**

Worms need a moist environment. Composters use this bedding to bury the waste. A variety of bedding can be used in your bin. Over time, the bedding will be eaten by the worms along with the food waste.

## REDWORMS Eisenia Foetida

Redworms are also known as red wigglers or manure worms, not night crawlers



Redworms can eat half their own weight in food everyday. At six weeks, the mature earthworm mates and produces cocoons. In three weeks, several worms will hatch from each cocoon.

Call 707 55-EARTH for VALCORE's network of worm workers and shredded paper. Or go to [www.worms.com](http://www.worms.com)

## SET UP WORM BIN

**WEIGH BEDDING**

4 to 6 lbs for a small bin  
9 to 14 lbs for large bin

**MIX WITH WATER**

Use 3 pints water for 1 lb bedding.

**PLACE BEDDING AND A  
HANDFUL OF SOIL IN BIN**

A handful of well-crushed egg-shells every few months is good for providing grit and calcium.

## ADD WORMS

### BURY KITCHEN WASTE

Once worms are down in bedding you, can start burying your garbage. Begin feeding your worms only a little at a time. As they multiply, you can add larger quantities of food waste. Bury the waste into the bedding regularly, rotating around the bin as you go. When you return to the first spot, most of the food you buried there should have been eaten. If not, don't worry; feed the worms less for a while.

**COVER** with black plastic and a lid to keep light out and moisture in.

### KEEP MOIST

**PLACE BIN** in a shady location where it will not freeze or overheat. Remember to make the location convenient. Consider a kitchen corner, patio, or garage.

**CHEWING BUGS** will migrate to the bin. They are beneficial to the com-posting process. **Ants** usually indicate a dry bin: sprinkle with water. **Fruit flies** are very annoying. Be sure waste is covered with bedding. Put up fly paper or make a **beer trap** using stale beer, a small jar and a plastic bag. Pour beer into jar; cut a small hole in the corner of the bag; place that corner down into the jar and bag over the rim creating a funnel. The flies will be attracted to the beer and drown.

### SOURCES:

Worms Eat My Garbage by Mary Appelhof  
Sold at Vallejo Museum Book Shop, 734 Marin,  
707 643-0077  
[www.wormdigest.org](http://www.wormdigest.org), [www.worms.com](http://www.worms.com)

## HARVEST VERMICOMPOST ... Worm Compost

After approximately 4 months you will have finished compost. Harvesting the compost and adding fresh bedding at least twice a year is necessary to help keep your worms healthy. Try one of these methods:

### LET THE WORMS DO THE WORK

Pull vermicompost and worms to one side of box. Add moist bedding to vacant side. Bury garbage in new bedding and cover. The worms will migrate to new covered bedding. In 2 months you can harvest compost from the old side and set up new bedding.

### DIVIDE AND DUMP

Remove all but 1/3 of worms and compost. Add new bedding. Put the compost in your garden...worms and all.

### DUMP AND HAND SORT

Dump contents of bin on a large plastic sheet outside on a sunny day. Make cone-shaped piles. The worms will go to the bottom to avoid the light. Harvest compost from the top and sides. Gather worms, set up new bedding and start again.

## USING VERMICOMPOST

- Dig into your garden or use as mulch
- Sprinkle around the base of house plants. You fertilize the plant each time you water.
- Make Compost Tea: Steep a handful of compost in a quart of water overnight, strain and use to water plants.

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Wiggle E Worm © 1993 Ecology Action

## EARTHWORMS ARE EASY

A COMPOSTING SYSTEM  
FOR KITCHEN WASTES



*Let worms eat your garbage!  
They will happily turn it into the world's  
richest compost. This fun and easy way  
to recycle organic kitchen wastes requires  
little work and helps plants thrive.*

Sponsored by  
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&



[www.VALCORErecycling.org](http://www.VALCORErecycling.org)

information:  
[www.recycle-guide.com](http://www.recycle-guide.com)  
**COMPOSTING HOTLINE**  
707 55-EARTH