

# VERMICULTURE, or Composting With Worms!



Hi!

I'm a Red Wiggler worm—not your average “Earth Worm”!  
I prefer to be indoors inside the home you create for me. I  
am used for composting because I eat a lot!

**Once you have worms and a bin, follow these easy steps to set up a worm bin. Soon, worms will be recycling food scraps into a healthy, nutrient-rich soil amendment called *compost*.**

## **Step 1. Get a clean bin.**

Think first about repurposing a container before buying a new one. The ideal size is 16" x 24" x 8" or 10 gallons, but you can use a smaller container if necessary. Reuse an old Tupperware container, build a box out of wood (line it with plastic), or even use a large takeout container.

## **Step 2. Prepare the bedding.**

Instead of soil, Red Wigglers live in moist newspaper bedding. Like soil, newspaper strips provide air, water, and food for the worms.

- Using about 50 pages, tear newspaper into 1/2" to 1" strips. Avoid using colored print.
- Place newspaper strips into a container, add water until bedding feels like a damp sponge.
- Transfer to the bin, keep bedding loose to provide air for the worms. Bin should be 3/4 full.
- Sprinkle 2-4 cups of soil in bin, to introduce beneficial microorganisms

## **Step 3. Add your worms!**

## **Step 4. Feed the worms!**

Cut or break food scraps into small pieces--the smaller, the better. Bury food scraps under the surface of newspaper bedding. Worms will eat fruit and vegetable scraps that would normally be thrown away, such as peels, rinds, and cores. You can add coffee grounds and egg shells too! NO meat, bones, oils, dairy, or excessive citrus should go into your worm bin.

Start small! Feed worms approximately 3 times their weight per week. Monitor the bin every week to see if the worms are or are not eating the food. Adjust feeding levels accordingly.

## **Step 5. Top the bedding off**

Place a full sheet of dry newspaper on top of the bedding. This will help maintain the moisture balance, keep any possible odors in the bin, and help prevent fruit flies from making a home in the bin. Replace this sheet frequently if fruit flies are present, or if bin gets too wet.

## **Step 6. Cover the bin with the lid**

Leave the lid ajar so the bin receives some air, or drill some holes into the bin. Avoid placing your worm bin in direct sunlight or heat.

Have questions, successes you'd like to share?  
Email us at: [bpc.info@bpca.ny.gov](mailto:bpc.info@bpca.ny.gov)

