

Worm Farming

Worm Farming is done with specialist worms that live in a purpose bought or built farm. The key factors with worm farming to consider are ensuring the worm farm is **dark**, **damp** and **cool**. Worms are communal creatures which live up to around 2/3 years, they breathe and absorb moisture through their skin and they also have no eyes, ears or noses.

Note that while the worms in worm farms are often called compost worms, they are not the same as the worms you will find in your garden, even those around your compost heap. The worms in the worm farm are adapted so they eat and reproduce quickly in food rich environments, while the worms in your garden are specialists at burying through the soil to find food and mates.

Worm Farm set-up and Structure

Worm Farms mostly have the same basic structure (pictured). The most important things that you will need to consider are:

- Compost worms
- Bedding (Coir-Peat Brick or shredded paper)
- Blanket for the top active layer
- Liquid collection



You can make your own farm from polystyrene boxes or plastic storage tubs. Just ensure that drainage holes in the active layers are covered with a mesh to prevent worms from falling through.

Feeding the Worms

OK

Fruit & vegetable scraps

Manure (horse/cow – be careful of worming)

Tea leaves / coffee grounds

Hair

Vacuum cleaner dust

Egg cartons

Newspaper (shredded)

AVOID

Fresh grass clippings

Citrus peels

Onions

Breads and sweets

Meats (raw or cooked)

Dairy

Ideal Conditions

Dark

In addition to the lid, add a moist 'blanket' to the top layer of the worm farm to sit above the bedding and food. Newspaper, natural fibres or hessian can be used.



Damp

Give the worms a bedding like a soaked and squeezed coir-peat brick. The coir remains moist and loose so the worms can move around comfortably but the worm tea (leachate) drains freely. These coir bricks can be purchased from gardening store or nurseries. The bedding should be about the dampness of a wrung out sponge.

Cool

Keep the worm farm in a sheltered location; a garage or shaded patio are ideal. In the winter months the worms productivity may slow down, but direct exposure to heat through direct sun may kill them quickly. You can add some extra insulation around the farm to keep them warm in winter and cool in summer.

Harvesting Worm Castings

1. Dig out a section from worm farm
2. Place on table in bright light
3. Push material into peaked mound
4. Worms will burrow to escape light
5. Scrape castings from the top and edges
6. Worms will continue to burrow during this process



Troubleshooting Worm Farming

