

Worm farming



What is worm farming?

A worm farm is a container made from plastic, wood, or any other lightweight, waterproof material. Everyone can compost using a worm farm. They don't smell, they don't take up much room and are great for people who live in units, high rises or have limited space. They can be kept indoors in office kitchens and school classrooms. They also make great companions for compost bins.

Did you know that more than a third of your waste could be used in a worm farm? By worm farming your food scraps at home you can:

- Improve your soil and grow healthier plants
- Reduce the need for weeding, watering and artificial fertilisers
- Encourage helpful garden worms and micro-organisms into your garden
- Help keep green waste out of landfill, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and odour problems

Test your knowledge!



To find out more about Composting please call the Hornsby Council Waste on 4856.



Tips:

- The liquid, which collects from the worms in the bottom tray, makes a great nutrient addition to your garden. First mix the worm liquid with water to make the colour of weak tea
- Do not over feed your worm. Add only more food when the first lot is partly eaten
- Remember to check your worm farm for good drainage if it is out in the rain
- The worms in worm farms are special worms and can be bought from your local nursery or hardware shop
- To help the worms eat more you can mash, or process the food before adding it to the farm

Trouble Shooting:

Smelly Worm farm

- You may be overfeeding the worms
- Stop feeding them for a couple of days and stir the material in the top layer. Adding a sprinkling of lime may help
- Continue this procedure regularly and start feeding again once the smell has gone
- Also avoid meats, dairy products and fatty foods

Evacuating worms

- If the worms are leaving it may be that the farm is too dry or too wet
- It is important to maintain moisture in the farm. Try leaving the bottom tap open with a bucket underneath to collect the liquid
- Also avoid putting acid foods, manures and pesticides in the farm

Unwelcome visitors

- Your worm farm may be too dry or too acidic
- Add water and lime to deter ants
- To dispose of maggots, put some milk soaked bread in the feeding tray. Leave it there for two days and dispose of it
- It is best to keep the worm bed covered with a hessian sack, newspaper or carpet

Non-breeding worms

- If your worms are not breeding it may be that the farm is too acidic. Some foods tends to form acid (such as fruit, grains and sugary food)
- Try adding some dolomite, wood ash or lime to the worm farm



Materials that CAN be worm farmed include:



- Vegetable and food scraps
- Soaked and ripped pizza boxes, egg cartons, paper
- Leaves
- Soil
- Hair
- Crushed egg shells
- Tea bags

Materials that CAN NOT be worm farmed include:



- Meat
- Fatty foods
- Dairy products
- Acidic foods eg orange peels, onions, chillies
- Manures
- Pesticides
- Potato peelings

How to make a worm farm:

- Find a shady spot in your back yard or balcony
- Place bedding material in the bottom of the tray
- Bedding material can be shredded newspaper or coconut fibre with a bit of soil or finished compost
- Add 1000 to 2000 worms and let them settle in for a week
- Add food to the worm farm and cover it with either bedding material or soaked newspaper

Test your knowledge!

