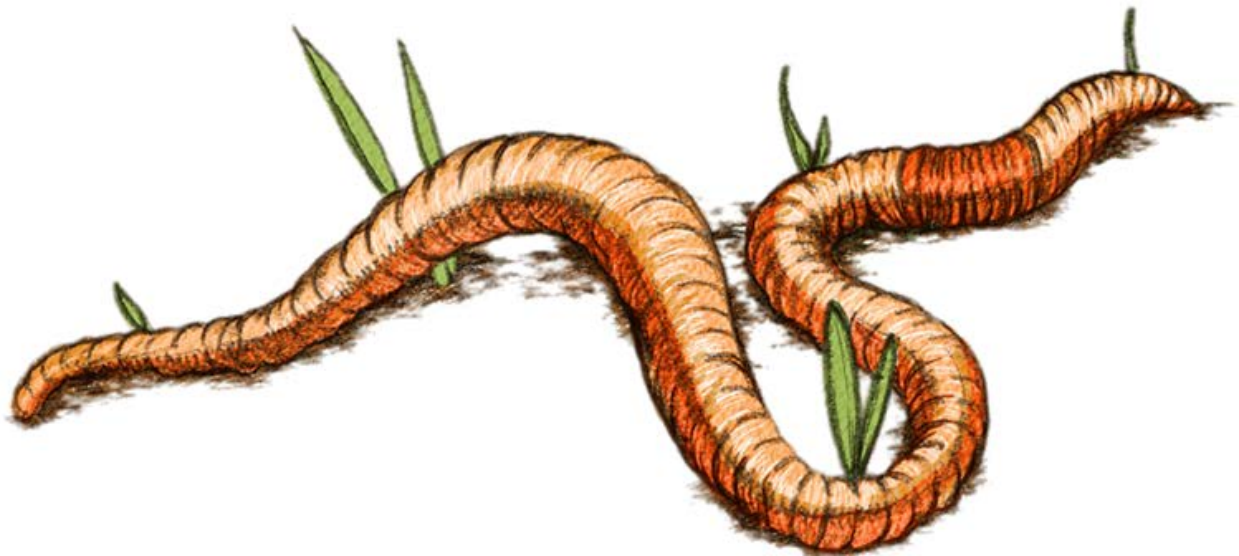


# YOUR WORM BIN

**Welcome to vermicomposting!**



(Image: [www.clipartkey.com/](http://www.clipartkey.com/) )

Some people successfully compost kitchen waste in an outdoor home composter such as Earth Machine. Others find that adding kitchen wastes and food scraps in an outdoor to the compost pile attracts pests and smells. Those people only compost yard wastes in their composters. An alternative to composting food scraps is vermiculture, which, as its name implies, uses worms. Usually, yard waste is not added to a worm bin, although such things as dry leaves can be used as bedding. Worms digest the food scraps and produce castings, which can be used as a fertilizer for plants.

By composting and recycling, you can reduce the amount of garbage you generate by up to 80%! It quickly becomes routine and makes a big difference. As an added bonus, the compost you generate will make your lawn and garden healthier and improve our sandy soil.

## SETTING UP YOUR WORM BIN

In a multi-layer worm bin, set up the lowest tier first.

1. Place slightly moistened bedding on the bottom. Bedding can be shredded cardboard, shredded paper, shredded *Siuslaw News*, or leaves. Some worm bins come with coir, or coconut fiber, for bedding.
2. Next, add the worms.
3. Add a layer of food scraps.
4. Cover the top with another layer of bedding or some moistened paper.
5. Add water as needed. As a general rule, the bedding should be about the consistency of a wet sponge.
6. Prepare the bottom layer first. As the worms digest material, prepare the next layer in the same way and the worms will migrate up. Then, harvest the compost from the lower tier.

## WHAT TO ADD

Coffee grounds, vegetable scraps, tea bags, egg shells, shredded paper. **Don't add fruit scraps if the bin is outside where bears might get it.**

Worms have small mouths. It works better if the material is chopped into small pieces.

Worms eat about half of their body weight per day, depending on the conditions. Don't overfeed the worms or the uneaten food scraps will begin to stink. If there is uneaten food after a few days, feed the worms less. If there's no uneaten food left, maybe they need more food. It's best to feed a couple of times a week.

## WHAT TO AVOID

Avoid meats, dairy products, citrus, bread, very salty or greasy foods. Worms don't like onions and garlic. Don't add pet wastes, ashes, or biodegradable plastic.

Usually, yard wastes are not added to a worm bin although such things as dry leaves can be used as bedding.

## **TAKING CARE OF THE WORM BIN**

In a multi-tiered worm bin, set up the lowest tier first. As the worms eat the food scraps on the bottom, prepare the next higher layer the same way as the first layer. The worms will migrate up and the compost on the bottom layer can be harvested. This takes an average of three months. When the worms have eaten all the food in the second layer, prepare the next higher layer, and so forth.

Check the moisture periodically. The bed should be moist, but not soggy. If it's too wet, or if it smells, add more dry bedding or feed the worms less. Too dry? Add water.

Worms don't like extremes of temperature. If the bin is outside, it may be good to cover it with a blanket if the temperature drops below freezing.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST AND/OR PARTICIPATING IN THE 2021 EMAC HOME COMPOSTING PILOT PROGRAM!

There are many good websites and YouTube videos about worm composting. Here are some that may be useful:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Berf8Sy0SCI>

<https://www.wormfarmfacts.com/Worm-Bin-Types.html>