

Worm Farms

70% Greens



Chopped fruit and veggie scraps



Egg shells



Cooked veggie leftovers



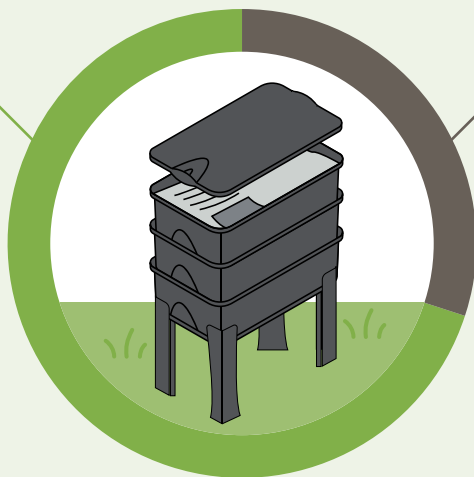
Coffee grounds, tea leaves, and teabags



Manure from vegetarian animals



Avocado



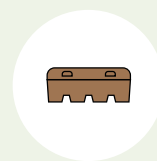
30% Browns



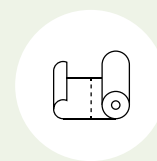
Small twigs



Dry leaves and garden waste



Cardboard and certified home compostable packaging



Shredded paper and newspaper



Untreated wood shavings



Dried brown grass clippings

Worm farms use composting worms (e.g. tiger worms) to eat through a mixture of food scraps, garden waste, paper and cardboard. Both the solids (castings) and the liquids (worm tea) make excellent fertilisers for the garden.

Worm farms are mostly for food waste, but small amounts of garden waste can be added.

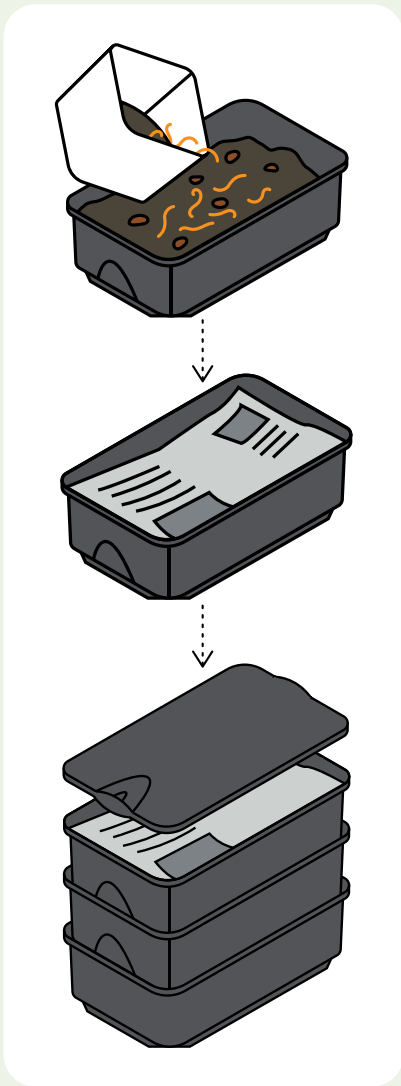
Once established, worms will process food waste quickly and provide a continuous supply of rich fertiliser. Most models are vermin-proof.

What to feed your worms

70% Greens: Organic waste that is full of nitrogen. Anything soft, fresh and moist. E.g. fresh fruit and vegetable scraps, coffee grounds and tea

bags, eggshells, manure from animals such as rabbits and guinea pigs.

30% Browns: Organic waste that is mainly carbon. Anything dry, brown and brittle. E.g. shredded or torn paper, torn up, wet cardboard such as egg cartons or toilet rolls, fallen leaves, vacuum dust from natural carpet.



What not to add

Do not include the following:



Dog and cat faeces



Cooked or processed food e.g. bread and pasta



Oils and liquids such as soup



Meat and milk products



Citrus or acidic foods (pineapple, kiwifruit)



Spicy food such as chilli, onion and garlic

Getting started

Choose a site sheltered from the sun so the worms don't get too hot in summer. Prepare your worm farm with a layer of damp, well drained bedding such as coconut fibre or compost, then add your worms.

Feeding: While your worms are settling in, be careful not to over feed them. Start with a small amount every 1-2 days and remove anything that goes mouldy. Slowly increase the food supply over the first 6 months as the population of worms increases. Eventually they will quickly consume all the food you give them.

Harvest time

Worm castings: The castings are ready to harvest when the lower layers of the worm farm smell earthy and look like a dark fine compost. At this point only a few worms can be seen in the lower layers. Spread the castings around your garden beds, or add one part castings to ten parts water, stir well and pour around the base of your plants.

Worm tea: Always let the liquid drain freely into a separate bucket. For use on the garden water the liquid down to the colour of weak black tea. Apply regularly around plant roots as a nutritious fertiliser.

Maintenance and troubleshooting

Worms need both air and moisture so make sure your worm farm is damp but well drained. In summer they may need occasional watering. Carefully passing a garden fork through the worm farm and incorporating Browns (e.g. torn up egg cartons) will help to keep your worm farm aerated.

Some of the most common problems are:

- **Fruit flies:** An indication that your worm farm is too acidic. Sprinkle garden lime or add more Browns to balance the pH.
- **Smells:** Your worm farm is probably too wet or becoming anaerobic at the bottom. Drain off the worm tea, remove castings, aerate with a garden fork and add Browns.
- **Food going mouldy/rotting:** Worms are either being overfed (can't keep up) or fed things they don't like. Check the lists of what to feed/not feed, and feed them a little less for a few weeks.
- **Worms trying to escape:** Means the conditions aren't right. Check drainage, moisture and acidity.