

Creating Your Own Can of Worms

Composting in a worm box

Container:

Use a shallow bin 10-20 inches deep, such as an opaque Rubbermaid® tub with a lid. Red worms feed near the surface so a large surface area is desirable.

Drill some small holes in the bottom of the bin for drainage as well as along the sides near the top for aeration. Holes should be 1/8" to 1/4" in diameter, every few inches.

Bedding:

Discarded cardboard, newspaper, paper grocery bags. Avoid colored or waxy products, which could be toxic to red worms. Peat moss and aged horse or cow manures can also be added.

Soak paper products overnight then shred and put about a 6-inch layer in the bin. (The paper easily pulls apart into shreds if soaked first.) Other beddings should be saturated but not dripping. Mix and soak them in another container before adding them into the worm bin.

Continue to add bedding a little at a time to keep the bedding in the bin highly porous.

Store the bin in a dark location or cover with a dark blanket or tarp. Worms will deeply burrow if exposed to light and, therefore, will not be feeding at the surface. Ideal temperatures are 50 to 70 degrees. The bin can be outside in summer (in a dark, shady location) but must be inside in winter.

Feeding:

Worms will digest the bedding materials, but they also like fresh produce. Add fruit and vegetable peelings and rinds, crushed eggshells, stale bread, coffee grounds and tea bags. **DO NOT** add meat, fish or dairy products. Chop food scraps into pieces one-inch square or smaller. This helps the worms process the scraps more quickly. You can also put the scraps in a blender or food processor for more finely chopped scraps.

Feed your worms once a day or every other day as follows:

Dig a small hole in the top six inches of the bedding. Put in the food scraps and completely cover them with bedding material. Select a new spot for the next feeding. Continue around the inside perimeter of the bin each time you feed. Insert a plastic or wood label in the spot where you just put the food scraps to mark your place for next time.



GREENHOUSES & GARDEN CENTER

Where beauty comes naturally.

13 Archie St., Auburn NY 13021

Located off Rte 38A in Auburn (315) 253-3030 • dickmanfarms.com

Creating Your Own Can of Worms

To Harvest:

Worm compost is ready when dark and crumbly and the bin is almost full. Remove contents of the bin and place in one or more conical piles on a large level surface in strong light for several hours. This will cause the worms to burrow to the bottom of the pile.

Meanwhile, prepare fresh bedding and put it in the worm bin with fresh food scraps. Now return to the small piles of worm compost. Slowly and gently take away the top and sides of each compost pile until you reach the bottom. The worms will be entwined in the bottom area. Pick up the worms and place them on top of the fresh bedding in the worm bin. They will burrow under within a few minutes.

Sort through the compost pile for bedding and scraps that aren't thoroughly composted and return them to the bin. Use the finished compost on houseplants and outdoor plants.



**DICKMAN
FARMS**

GREENHOUSES & GARDEN CENTER

Where beauty comes naturally.

13 Archie St., Auburn NY 13021

Located off Rte 38A in Auburn (315) 253-3030 • dickmanfarms.com