

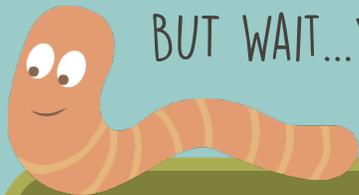
PICKLE BUCKET WORMS?

The Worthy kitchen goes through buckets upon buckets of pickles every week, and we were sick of seeing them go to waste (even if they did get recycled). So we decided to put them to good use.

Inside this brochure, you'll find instructions on how to create a worm composting bin using the kits we've prepared from our used pickle buckets. They're free to take and located to the left of the greenhouse. If we're out, the rack will be empty and you'll have to check back in a week or so. Feel free to request one from our gardener at lisa@worthygardenclub.com.

We've done our best to clean out the pickle smell, but you still might get a whiff here and there. Don't worry, it doesn't bother the worms and will go away in time.

We drilled 1/8" holes in the lid and along the top of the bucket for air flow as well as 3/16" holes in the bottom of the bucket for drainage. Plastic bins can be harder to manage because of moisture levels, but they're far cleaner than wooden bins to keep inside the house.

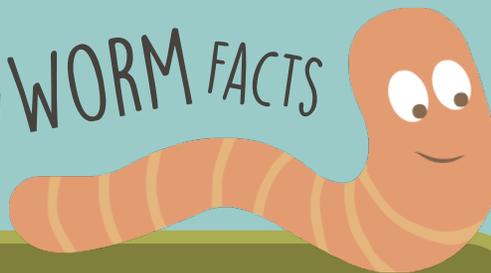


BUT WAIT...YOU NEED THE RIGHT WORMS!

The best worms for composting are red wigglers, *Eisenia fetida*. They're not the big earthworms you usually find when digging around in your garden, so don't try to use those!

Red wigglers are social creatures that like living in worm communities. They consume up to 75% of their own weight in raw organic material every day, reproduce quickly (doubling in population every 90 days), and are one of the hardiest worm species around, surviving temps as low as 40°F and as high as 80°F. They're also near-surface dwellers that actively seek out organic matter (AKA your food waste), making them perfect for vermicomposting!

FUN WORM FACTS



As a defense mechanism, red wigglers emit a pungent liquid when handled roughly, hence their scientific name *Eisenia fetida*. "Fetida" comes from the Latin word "fetid," meaning "foul smelling."

They have five hearts - all the more to love you with!

Red wigglers don't have eyes or ears. They do, however, have light receptors which allow them to sense lightness and darkness, and nerves to sense vibrations through the soil.

Red wigglers are hermaphroditic, meaning they have both male and female reproductive organs, but they still need a mate to reproduce.

HOW TO USE

When your worm compost is finished, simply use it to top dress your houseplants or garden. Worm castings are high in nitrogen, calcium, magnesium, and phosphorus and have superior aeration and water retention capabilities. They're also chock-full of beneficial microorganisms, which improve the overall health of your soil and plants. The excess moisture that drips out of your bin, called "worm tea," is useful too!

Water or spray your plants with it for a nice nutrient boost.

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PICKLE BUCKET WORMS



TURN YOUR KITCHEN WASTE INTO GOLD WITH OUR PLASTIC BUCKET COMPOSTING KIT!

CHOOSE A SETUP

We've provided buckets for a number of different setups. At a minimum, you'll need one pre-drilled bucket with a lid to house your worms, but you can also grab a bucket without holes to stack underneath and catch excess moisture. Otherwise, you'll need some sort of tray. Take a second pre-drilled bucket for a three-bucket worm tower.



PREPARE BEDDING

Fill six to eight inches of a pre-drilled bucket with half shredded newspaper and half peat moss (or coconut coir for a more eco-friendly option). Moisten to the level of a wrung-out sponge. Toss in a handful of grit like sand, soil, corn starch, or ground-up egg shells to help your worms chew up their food, as they don't have teeth.

ADD YOUR WORMS

You'll need to pick up a quarter to a half pound of red wigglers from your local bait shop or online supplier. Dump the worms into your bucket, close the lid, and leave alone for a week so they can settle in. They'll feed on the bedding until you start giving them scraps.

Central Oregonians, contact the **Wonder Worman** at laurie@wonderworman.com for red wigglers. That's where we got ours!

If you can't find a local source, **Uncle Jim's Worm Farm** and **Planet Natural** are two reliable online suppliers.

PLACE IN SAFE LOCATION

Red wigglers perform best in a dark, quiet spot away from high-traffic areas. They thrive between 55-77°F but can survive in temperatures as low as 40°F. Keeping them under the kitchen sink or in a laundry room works well. Always keep out of direct sunlight.

HOW TO FEED YOUR WORMS

Start slowly - don't feed your worms for a week or so when you first introduce them to a new bin with new bedding, then begin adding scraps gradually to gauge what they can handle. As a rule of thumb, one pound of worms can eat about a half pound of garbage per day.

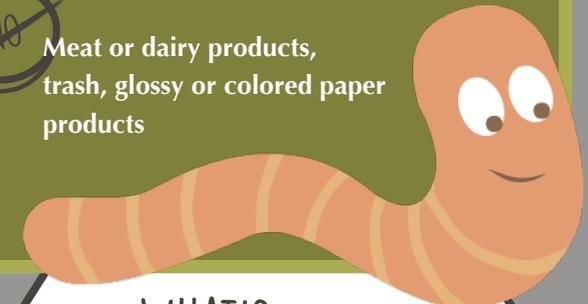


Fruits & veggies (especially melons), tea bags, coffee grounds and filters, pulverized egg shells, moistened newspaper and junk mail

Citrus, onions, breads, and pasta SPARINGLY



Meat or dairy products, trash, glossy or colored paper products



WHAT'S WRONG?

HARVESTING METHODS

Your worm compost, also known as worm castings, is ready to harvest when the original bedding has completely broken down and the humus that's left has a dark, earthy texture and aroma. It should never stink! If it does, you've done something wrong. See troubleshooting to the right.

With any of the following methods, make sure you wear gloves. Pick out stray worms and cocoons along the way and toss back into your bin or an outdoor compost pile.

- 1 Dump the entire bucket onto some newspaper and pick out worms and cocoons, placing them back into the bucket with new bedding and a handful of finished compost. Kids love this one!
- 2 Push finished compost to one side of the bucket, filling the other half with fresh bedding and a small amount of food scraps. The worms will migrate over within a week or two and you'll be able to harvest the finished half.
- 3 Fill a second pre-drilled bucket with fresh bedding and food scraps and stack on top of the first bucket once it's half-full, making sure the bottom makes light contact with the compost pile. Your worms will migrate up into the second bucket within a couple weeks, allowing you to harvest the finished compost in bottom bucket all at once.

MY WORM BIN IS SMELLY

You are feeding your worms faster than they can eat, resulting in spoiled food. Pull any moldy waste out of the bin. Try feeding in smaller amounts and chopping waste into smaller pieces.

Your bin could also be too wet. If worms look bloated and pale and the compost is soggy, add more dry bedding and check your drainage holes. Worms will rot in consistently wet conditions.

MY WORM BIN IS TOO DRY

Periodically mist with a spray bottle or add more moist bedding. Worms are composed of 75% water, and they like their environment to match.

MY WORMS ARE TRYING TO ESCAPE

If your worms are crawling out of the bedding or up the sides and lid of your bin, it's either too wet or too acidic inside. Cut out citrus for a while if moisture levels seem correct or add some dry bedding if it's too wet.