

Worm Farm Fact sheet

Worm farms are great for homes with small yards or no gardens. Composting worms break down food quickly and produce rich castings and liquid fertiliser.

What you will need...

- ✓ **Worm farm** - Buy one or make your own
- ✓ **Bedding** - Coir block soaked in water, compost or shredded newspaper
- ✓ **1,000 composting worms**
- ✓ **Newspaper or Cardboard**
- ✓ **Worm blanket** - newspaper, hessian sack or old t-shirt

Choosing the site...

Choose a well shaded spot out of direct rain or sun. Worms prefer a temperature between 18°C and 24°C.

Preparing the worm farm...

Set up the worm farm with two trays. A bottom tray to collect the liquid and a working tray for the worms.

Place a sheet of newspaper on the base of the first working tray. Add bedding on top, followed by the worms. Cover with a worm blanket and allow the worms to settle for a week.

A second working tray can be added on top once the first working tray is full. Begin feeding worms here and cover with the worm blanket.

Caring for your worms...

When worms are cared for, their population can double in 2-3 months!

Food: Feed the worms the right things (see over page) and feed again once they have finished their previous meal.

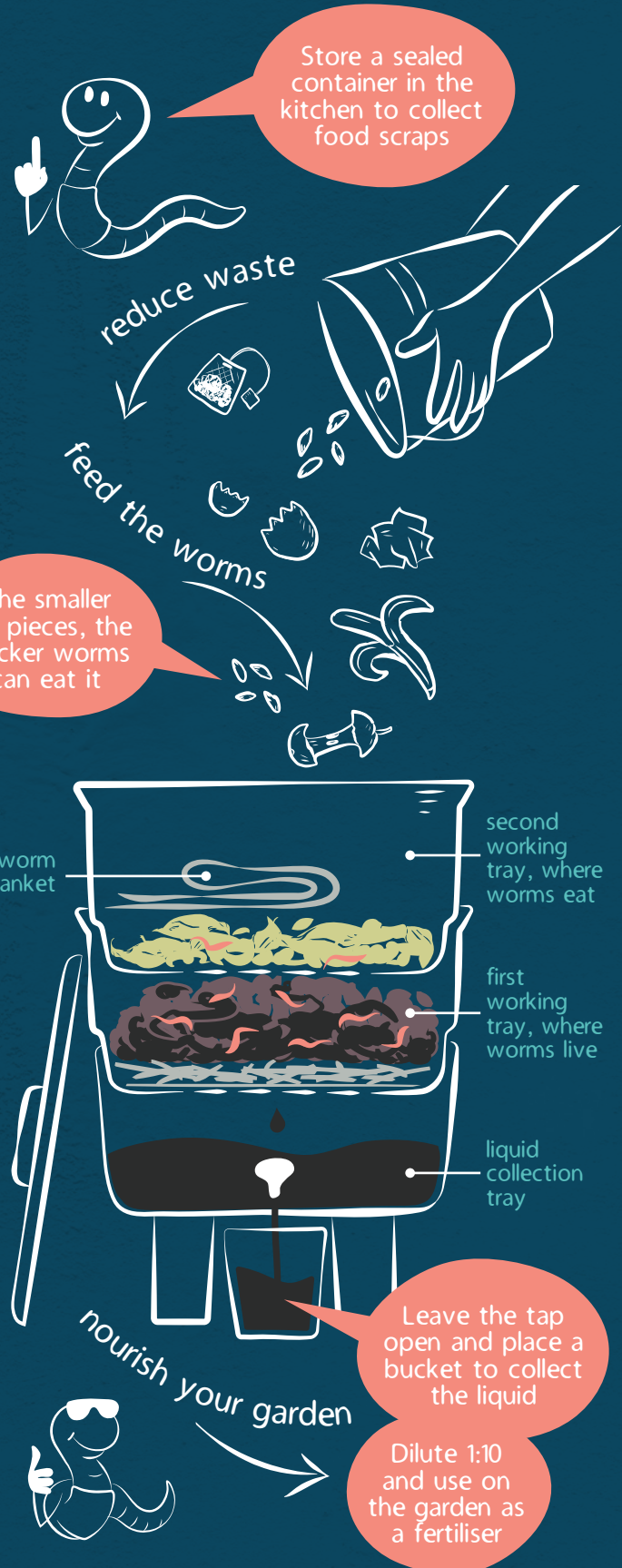
Moisture: Worms breathe through their skin, so keep the bedding the consistency of a wrung-out sponge.

Well-drained: Drain the worm farm regularly so the worms don't drown.

Air: Worms need air flow, ensure the air vents in the worm farm aren't covered and fluff up castings every so often.

Dark: Worms don't like sunlight. Keep the worm farm covered. This will help keep pests away.

Acidity: Worms prefer an alkaline home. Sprinkle dolomite, garden lime or crushed egg shells every so often to reduce acidity.





What to feed Worms...

- ✓ Fruit and vegetable scraps
- ✓ Tea leaves, tea bags and coffee grounds
- ✓ Torn up newspaper and cardboard
- ✓ Vacuum dust and hair
- ✓ Crushed egg shells

Did you know, worms can eat about half their own body weight in one day!



Decomposition is a natural process, it's easy to work out problems and take simple steps to fix it...

Troubleshooting



Smelly

Worms may be overfed or it might be too wet.

- Avoid overfeeding worms, only add in more food once the last meal has been eaten
- Mix uneaten food through and cover with damp newspaper
- Sprinkle crushed eggs, dolomite or garden lime
- Add dry materials, such as shredded paper
- Drain liquid regularly

Unwanted visitors

Ants, fruit flies, spider or cockroaches may be a bit of a nuisance, but they won't harm your worms.

- Avoid overfeeding worms, only add in more food once the last meal has been eaten
- Add shredded newspaper or cardboard
- Mix uneaten food through and cover with damp newspaper
- If your worm farm has legs, place each leg in a bowl of water
- Drain liquid regularly
- Sprinkle some dolomite, garden lime or crushed egg shells

Going on holiday?

Essential steps before going away.

- Keep the worm farm in a sheltered spot
- Fill the top tray with plenty of shredded newspaper or cardboard
- Cover with damp newspaper
- Drain the liquid

- ✗ Meat or bone
- ✗ Citrus
- ✗ Sugary foods
- ✗ Garlic, onion or chilli
- ✗ Oil or dairy
- ✗ Dog or cat waste

Castings can be harvested

Harvesting can happen once every eight weeks from the full tray. Small amounts can be harvested more frequently.

1. Castings should smell earthy and have a soil like texture.
2. Place non-decomposed materials to the side. Scoop out some casting onto a table in full light and mound into small piles.
3. Leave the piles for 10-15 minutes, worms will burrow down away from light.
4. Collect worm-free castings from the top and sides of pile into a bucket and transfer to garden beds.
5. Return the tray back to the worm farm.

Image Source (below) EnviroCom Australia 2013©

