



## BUILD YOUR OWN WORM BIN

### Materials needed:

- 1 large opaque Rubbermaid container with lid
- a drill
- newspaper
- water
- worms and soil
- food scraps

**Step 1 DRILL HOLES** every 6" around and on top of the container. Worms need air to breathe! They are also sensitive to light so make sure your bin is dark inside and not see-through.

**Step 2 MAKE THE WORMS' BED:** Worms eat their beds! A worm bed includes dead leaves, straw, newspaper, or cardboard. Tear bedding into small pieces and wet it so it feels like a wrung-out sponge. Fill ½ the bin with bedding. Keep your bin in the shade during the summertime and someplace where they won't freeze in the winter. You might have to find an indoor shelter to keep worms warm in the winter, and you might find that their beds need extra moisture in the summer.

**Step 3 ADD SOIL AND WORMS:** Did you know that there are other living organisms in the soil alongside the hard-working red wiggler worms? There are microscopic fungi and bacteria that help worms to eat our food scraps. Red wigglers are different from the earthworms found in our garden and you can get them online or at some feed supply stores!

### Step 4 FEED YOUR WORMS:

**Worms love:** apple cores, banana and orange peels, sandwich crusts (free of meat or dairy), kale stems, droopy lettuce, carrots tops, egg shells, coffee grounds, etc. (You can even feed them this paper when you're finished!)

**Worms do not love:** meat, dairy, or oil—these can rot and attract rodents. Worms are also sensitive to too much citrus as the acidity can harm their skin.

**Step 5 TURN IT:** Worms help to turn what's inside and aerate the soil just by digging and moving around, but we speed up the process by turning the soil, which is easily accomplished by exploring!

**Step 6 HARVEST:** Use your worms' waste (farmers call it "castings") in your own garden! Here's how: move all current worm bin contents to one side of the bin. Put new bedding and food scraps in the empty side and let the worms migrate over (this could take about a week) and harvest your amazing soil amendment.

### Did something go wrong?

**Bad smell-** Check to see if there is meat or dairy in your bin and if so, remove it.

**Too wet-** Add more dry bedding like dead leaves and shredded newspaper. Worms breathe through their skin so they need to be kept moist, but they can't swim so the bin should not be too wet.

**Too dry-** It's okay to add more water over the dry bedding, or even dampen handfuls of bedding.

**Worm die-off-** Start by removing excess citrus and check that the bin has a balance of kitchen scraps and dead leaves and newspaper (browns and greens, aka Nitrogen and Carbon). Additionally, if the bed is mostly castings, it is likely time to harvest and your worms need a fresh bed.

### Further reading:

[Compost Stew](#) by Mary McKenna Siddals

[Worms Eat My Garbage](#) by Mary Appelhof