

Worm Bin Kits

Content:

- 2 Bins and lids
- Newspaper for bedding and blanket
- 4 Air spacer blocks
- Vermicomposting book

Preparing:

Worm Bins:

- Remove material from both bins
- Place 2 to 3 inches of water in the bin without screen holes

Bedding:

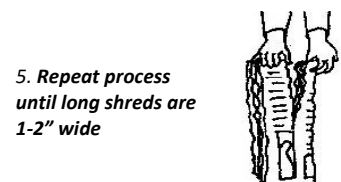
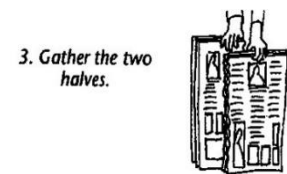
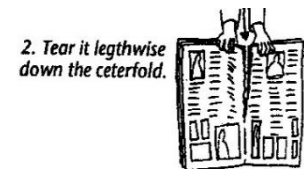
The worms must live in a moist environment, if it is too dry, they will die.

The least expensive and most readily available bedding is hand-shredded newsprint. A commonly asked question about newsprint is, "Isn't the ink harmful to the worms?" The answer is no. Most newspapers stopped using lead in their inks years ago, and the other ingredients in ink are not toxic to worms. The slick, glossy sections and ad supplements are a different story—they may possibly contain inks with heavy metal based pigments and should be avoided.

A handful of ground limestone or finely crushed eggshells provides some grit to aid in breaking down materials within the worm's gizzard.

Fill the bottom bin with 2 inches of water. Hand-shredded bedding materials (strips should be no greater than one to two inches wide) should be immersed in water for several minutes, or until thoroughly wet, and then the excess water wrung out. By preparing bedding with approximately the same moisture content (75%) as the worm's body, the worms don't have to combat an environment that is either too dry or too moist. After all the newspaper has been removed, leave a minimum of a half inch of liquid in the bottom bin. This help cool the bin system in the summer and maintain heat in the winter. This minimum should always be in the bin.

Fill the bin three fourths full with well-moistened bedding, such as hand-shredded newspaper, cardboard or manure, and add a handful of limestone, or crushed eggshells.



Hint: Tear with the grain of the paper. If you cannot tear long strips, then you are probably tearing against the grain, turn the paper 90° before tearing it.

Newspaper Blanket:

Worm blankets provide extra protection against evaporation. They keep the top of the bin dark, and worms like it dark. By Keep your bin covered and keep your worms happy! It can be used as a backup food source.

Worm blankets need to be watered, with a spray bottle, whenever the newspaper looks or feels dry. The bedding should have the consistency of a wrung-out sponge. When it does, you know you are doing it right. The best coverings for your worm bin are primarily a lid, and optionally, a newspaper blanket.

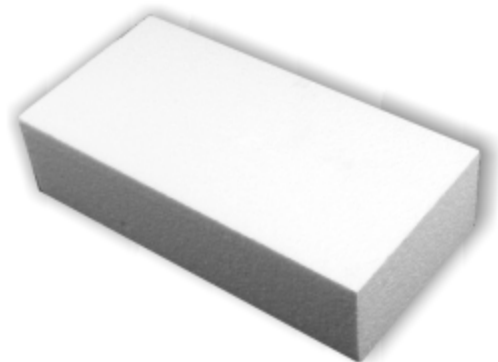
1. Open newspaper to center fold
2. Take 12 sheets and layer them on top of each other
3. Fold back to normal position at center fold
4. Soak in water until thoroughly wet, about 5 minutes
5. Drain excess water, by holding up one corner until the water barely dripping off
6. Placed length wise on the top of the moist bedding, leaving approximately a quarter inch space around on all sides for air circulation



Air Spacer Blocks: (Styrofome)

Air spacer blocks serve many purposes

- When the bins are stacked together they are hard to separate. The blocks makes separating them easier.
- If there is more than a half inch of liquid in the bottom of bin, and the liquid reaches the bottom of the bin above, the liquid from the bottom bin will wick up in to the top bin.
- Placing 2 air spacer blocks on top of each, 2 inches from the ends with the handles



Vermicomposting during hot weather

The most important thing to remember is that your worm bin needs to be in the shade all year around. Check your bedding now to make sure you have enough bedding and it is moist to insulate worms during warmer summer months.

Questions I get asked are:

1. Can my worm bin get some sunlight?

Worm bin can get some morning sunlight up until 10:00 A.M. after that the sun gets too hot and will start to heat up the bin. If left in the sunlight after that time, you might kill the worms.

2. During really hot weather can my worm bin left outside as long as it is in the shade?

Once the temperature goes above the 105 degrees, worm bins need to be completely out of the heat, if possible. Preferably indoors. If it is not possible to bring the worm bin indoors, I suggest that they get, depending on how many worm bins they have, 4 to 6 two liter plastic soda bottles and do the following:

- Put a teaspoon of table salt in each bottle
- Fill the bottle $\frac{3}{4}$ quarters of the way full with water
- Place bottles in the freezer overnight
- Once frozen place 1 to 3 bottles, depending on the size of the worm bin, on top of the newspaper blanket. On very hot days or during heat waves, the bottles may need to be changed twice a day. Most often the bottles only need to be changed once a day.

3. Why do you place salt in the bottle?

Salt slows the thawing process and makes the solution colder.

4. Can the frozen bottles be placed in the bottom bin instead of placing them on top of the newspaper blanket?

Yes you can, but remember that cold air goes down not up like heat and it will not be very effective in cooling the bedding

5. Can my worm bin be left in the garage?

Unless the garage has air conditioning the answer is No. The garage can and will get hotter than the temperature outside and lacks moving air ventilation.

References:

Red Wiggler Worm Suppliers

https://www.rcwaste.org/Portals/0/Files/Compost/Red_Wiggler_Worm_Suppliers.PDF

Worms Eat My Garbage

By Mary Appelhof (Flower Press, 1997)

Vermicomposting

By Riverside County Department of Waste Resources

