

Worm farm

What is it?

Worm farms are ideal for households that have small or no yards. Worm farms produce a liquid fertiliser and a solid fertiliser called castings. Worm farms are low maintenance, just make sure to follow our tips below to keep your worms happy.

What you need

Worm farm – these can be purchased from Council at a discounted rate or from some garden and hardware stores. You can also make your own worm farm for a DIY project.

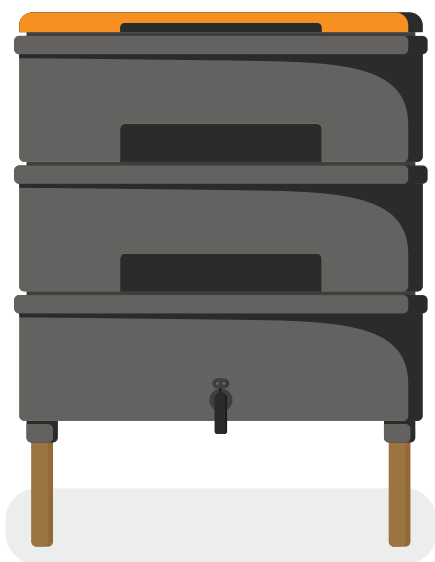
Worms – these can be purchased from Council at a discounted rate or from some local garden and hardware stores.

Bedding – most worm farms will come with a coir brick but if you are making your own worm farm, you can purchase these individually from supermarkets and hardware stores. You'll also need a few sheets of newspaper or plain brown cardboard.

Suitable location – Keep them in a cool, undercover location. Worms also do not like the heat. Their preferred temperature is between 18°C-24°C. If you have the space, keep your worms inside or in a garage.

Food waste – your worms will need to be fed, so make sure you have somewhere to store your food scraps in your kitchen. Worms can be a bit picky, so be sure to read our list of dos and don'ts below.

Size – Small: 38cm (l), 38cm (w), 29cm (h + legs).



Setting up and getting started

- 1 Once you've chosen your location, assemble or build your worm farm.
- 2 Place a layer of wet newspaper or cardboard in the base of the top tray of your farm. Add the coir brick (bedding) in the top layer, making sure you've soaked it in water and squeezed out the excess water first.
- 3 Now you can add your worms! Spread the worms out over the bedding.
- 4 Give your worms a nice, cool blanket. Create your worm blanket with a piece of moistened newspaper, cardboard or hessian. The blanket sits on the very top, helping to keep your worms cool and moist. The blanket also helps to discourage any little fruit flies who might be attracted to the food scraps.
- 5 Let your worms settle into their new home for a week before you start feeding them. Place their food scraps under their blanket.

What can I feed my worms

- Most fruit and vegetable scraps.
- Tea leaves and coffee grounds.
- Small amounts of shredded paper.

What shouldn't I put in?

- Garden waste.
- Meat, grains, seafood, dairy.
- Large amounts of acidic foods, such as citrus, pineapple, tomatoes.
- Chilli, onions or garlic.



Tips for caring for worms

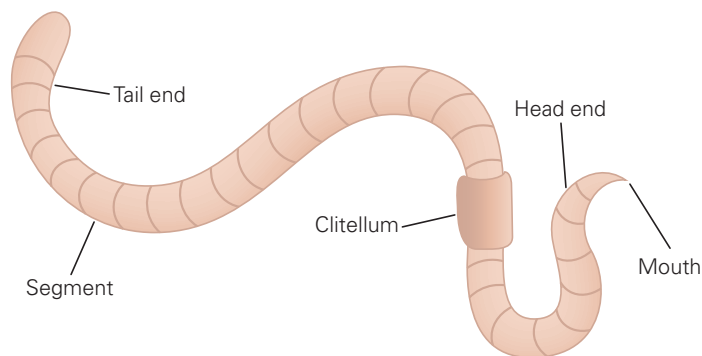
Drainage – if there’s no worm liquid collecting down the bottom or the castings start to look sloppy, make sure your drainage holes are clear from blockages.

Worms huddled in a ball = stressed out worms. They might be too hot, the castings might be too wet and not draining or you’ve fed them the wrong foods.

Mouldy food? Perhaps you’ve added more food than your worms can handle. Replace mouldy food with fresh scraps.

Worms congregating under the lid could be a sign that it’s about to rain. Worms congregating in your bottom layer where the liquid collects could be a sign that they’re too hot.

Can you see some tiny yellow balls, about the size of a match head? Congratulations! You’re about to have some baby worms. These are cocoons with little baby worms inside and are a fabulous sign that your worm farm is happy and healthy.



Worm facts:

- Worms can eat their own body weight in food within 24 hours
- Worms are vegetarians, so don’t feed them any meat
- Worms don’t have any eyes, teeth or ears
- Worms don’t have lungs, so they breathe through their skin

How to harvest your worm castings and worm liquid

Worm castings – are a form of organic matter produced from worms (worm poo).

How do you know your castings are ready? It will look like brown soil with no smell.

To harvest your castings, pick a bright sunny day and remove the castings from the farm and form into a pyramid-shaped mound. The worms will move to the base of the mound and you will be able to take the castings from the top. Once you’ve taken castings from the top of your mound, push it back up into a pyramid shape and harvest castings from the top- the worms continue to bury down and away from the light. Be sure to remove any stray worms and place back in to your worm farm.

Another way to harvest your castings is to swap over your top and middle layers. You’ll need to be patient if using this technique, as the worms might take a few weeks to relocate to the new top layer. Once you start putting your food into the new top layer, the worms will slowly gravitate up, leaving the castings in your middle tray (the old top layer) ready for harvesting.

To use the castings, dig directly into garden beds, spread around the base of plants or mix into potting mix. You can also place in a bucket with some water to steep and add this to your plant pots and garden beds.

Worm liquid:

The worm liquid will collect in the bottom layer of your worm farm and can be collected any time you want to use it. Be sure to regularly drain the liquid, even if you aren’t using it. Worms are great in so many ways, but they don’t know how to swim!

To use as a fertiliser around your garden, dilute 1-part worm liquid to 10-parts water.

More information



For more information on how to purchase a discounted composting system and for other fact sheets, visit:
www.maroondah.vic.gov.au/DiscountCompost
or scan the QR code.

Did you know Council run regular workshops? To find out more, visit: www.maroondah.vic.gov.au/Waste-Education

