



Wormery - information sheet



What is worm composting?

Worm composting is 'the process of using earthworms to break down food and garden waste'. This is faster and more nutrient productive than normal composting. The earthworm castings (the material produced from the digestive tracts of worms) contain five times more nitrogen, seven times more phosphorus and eleven times more potassium. They are rich in humic acids and improve the structure of 'ordinary' soil'.

What is a wormery?

A wormery is an easy-to-use, efficient, enclosed unit with several separate but linked compartments for the live worms and the plant food.

How does a wormery work?

The food and green waste is placed into the wormery and the worms then feed on this, converting it into a bio-rich, high quality compost and concentrated liquid feed.

What sort of waste goes into a wormery?

Any organic food waste such as peelings, cooked and uncooked scraps, teabags and even shredded newspaper and paper kitchen towels can be put in the wormery. Other organic materials such as egg shells and card can also be put into the wormery as these are all high in fibre and essential for process.

Below you can see lists of what you can and cannot feed your worms, if you're not sure and in doubt just leave it out.

Feed your worms;

Paper
Cardboard
Egg Shells
Leftover and cooked fruit and vegetable peelings
Cakes/ Biscuits
Citrus Fruits
Pasta and Rice
Coffee grounds/ Tea bags
Pet and Human hair
Cereals
Sugar
Pizza/ Bread
Leaves (in moderation)
Baked beans
Small amount of dead flowers

Please do not feed your worms;

Meat or Fish
Bones
Garlic/ Onion / Salt
Diary products: milk, cheese, butter, eggs
Insecticides and pesticides
Solvents/ Paints
Oils
Spicy food such as curry
Soaps
Poisonous plants/ weeds
Lawn cuttings – large quantities can harm the worms
Non biodegradable material e.g. plastic/ metal
Chicken manure (too high in ammonia)
Pet faeces or Nappies
Hoover contents

Where should I keep a wormery?

You don't need a garden to have a wormery as it is a self contained unit. It is best kept somewhere within easy reach of the kitchen and as they do not smell you could even keep your wormery on a balcony. In winter you may have to bring your wormery indoors or wrap it up so the worms do not freeze.

What do I get from my wormery?

A strong, nutrient rich, liquid feed which you dilute with water prior to use as an excellent plant food and a rich organic compost. This is produced more quickly than the compost and can usually be produced within 8 weeks.

When you are able to use the compost will depend on how much food you feed the wormery but usually it will take an average of around 6 months. It may also depend on what time of year you start your wormery. E.g. if you start in the winter then it could take a little longer as the worms are slow eaters during winter.

Why should I have a wormery instead of a conventional compost heap?

Wormeries are more beneficial than composters because:

- ✓ The worms are able to eat their own bodyweight of organic matter in one day
- ✓ They can reduce the compost's volume by 85%
- ✓ A strong nutrient liquid feed is produced for outdoor and indoor plants. This reduces the need for chemical fertilizers which have a detrimental impact on the environment
- ✓ The worms operate effectively on small volumes of waste
- ✓ They help prevent odours due to the rapid digestion
- ✓ Unlike conventional composters, you can run a wormery if you don't have a garden. Some wormeries are even suitable for indoor use

About a third of household waste is organic, so if this is composted (by using a wormery or home composter), you are reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill.

For more information....

www.wasteonline.org.uk/resources/InformationSheets/Compost

Where can I buy my wormery?

There are many wormeries on the market of all sizes and styles, a few places these can be found are;

www.recyclenow.com/compost

www.garden-marketplace.co.uk/