

Do Worms Die In The Box?

Yes dead worm bodies decompose very quickly, because their bodies are between 75%-90% water. If you find many dead worms you should find out the cause.

When It's Raining Why Do The Worms Like To Gather In The Lid?

You are observing the worms' sensitivity to pressure changes in the weather. They will often go up into the lid even before it rains, this would naturally take them out of the soil and prevent drowning during flooding, don't worry they will return to their food.

What Happens When My Single Tray Wormery Is Full ?

If you have only one tray and the wormery is full of compost, the worms should be close to the surface. All you need to do is remove the top layer, place to 1 side (on a bin liner or the path - be careful your worms don't escape, they can move very fast) then remove the rest of the worm castings / compost, check the compost for worms and their eggs, and return them to the bin along with the original top layer. The rest of the compost can be placed in your garden, then simply start adding food back into the wormery until the bin is refilled.

What Can I Feed Them?

Basically anything that has lived and died can be fed to your worms. The following are foods that worms like.

Vegetables, Fruits, Coffee, Tea Bags, Bread, Rice, Pasta, Flowers, Cereals, Crushed Egg Shells, Cakes, Cardboard, Paper, Pet/ Human Hair

The following foods should be given in very small amounts

Meat, Garlic, Onions, Citrus Fruits

The following shouldn't be given to your worms

Bones, Dairy Products, Oil, Soaps, Grass Cuttings, Insecticides / Pesticides.

Worms will also eat more if food waste is cut into small pieces.

Can Worms Eat Animal Waste?

Yes - though certain rules apply

Rabbits / Guinea Pigs / Mice etc - Worms will eat bedding, straw and droppings

Chickens / Birds - Droppings very high in ammonia. Manure needs to age.

Horses - Make sure the manure has aged

Dogs / Cats - Worms love it ! - Wait one week after using worming tablets.

Warning - Dog & Cat poo can contain harmful pathogens. Therefore any compost made should be buried away from vegetable patches and children's play areas.

Always wash your hands after using the compost or handling the worms.

Pregnant women should not empty litter trays or handle cat poo

HELP All My Worms Are Escaping!!

When a wormery is first assembled this will probably happen on the first night.

Basically a new wormery is a sterile environment that doesn't have the correct balance of bacteria and micro-organisms present, so the worms will try to escape.

The easiest way to settle the worms into their new home is to add a spade full of used compost or garden soil – this will have all the correct nutrients and bacteria, and will get your new wormery off to the best possible start.

if you experience 'worm wander' the following tips should help

Leave the wormery in a box, or place inside a bin liner (remember to seal the top at night – and undo during the day) any worms that do escape, can be easily collected up and replaced into your wormery.

Leave a light on over the worms at night – Worms don't like light so will be less inclined to leave.

it will only take a few days for your worms to settle in, and lose the urge to wander off.

Then they will happily stay in the wormery,

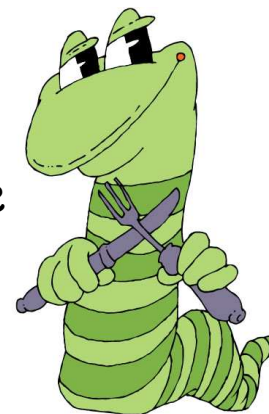
Handling Worms & Compost Does Not Pose Any Known Health Risks However In The Interests Of Good Hygiene Always Wash Your Hands After Handling

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Don't Let Your Food Go To Waste

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Instructions For Setting Up Your Wormcity Wormery

- 1) Remove the coir block and place into a large bucket or bowl. Pour 3 litres of warm water onto the coir and leave for approximately 3 hours. The coir will expand to 3 times its size and soak up all the water. Crumble up any remaining loose lumps of coir with a fork or your hands then squeeze out all the water. The coir should be as wet as a wrung out sponge.
- 2) Insert tap into the pre-drilled hole in sump (please screw into place, don't push) Build your wormery (Sump = tap on bottom), slide one bin inside (They nest inside each other – not stack on top). A really good tip is to place a house brick in the sump, as this allows any worms that fall into the sump to be able to climb back out NB the other trays if purchased will be added later
- 3) Place the supplied mesh into the bottom of the top bin (It may need to be cut to size) Place a few sheets of damp newspaper over the mesh (to stop the worms making an initial escape through the mesh)
- 4) Place the prepared coir on top of the newspaper (If possible add some garden soil/ used compost to the mixture, as the soil contains the correct bacteria to get your wormery off to a great start)
- 5) Add your worms & a handful of worm food
- 6) Add some damp (soaked and squeezed out) newspaper on the top (ripped up/ shredded) to a depth of 2 inches
- 7) Clip on the lid (If you have an Executive Wormery, we have included a diagram of how to put on and take off the lid on the next page of this brochure).
- 8) You may find it beneficial to stand the wormery on bricks. this will make emptying the liquid from the sump easier.
- 9) Watch out for worm wander – **see HELP all my worms are escaping!** Further on for tips on how to make your worms feel at home, and stop wandering on their first night

Feeding

The biggest mistake that people make when starting off a new wormery is to over feed the worms; this could result in creating a poisonous environment, and ultimately kill them. Although we try to make the journey as stress free as possible, they do need time to settle into their new home and acclimatise to their new surroundings. Therefore we advise that new worms should be left for two weeks before you start to feed them your kitchen wastes. A small handful of the supplied worm food once a week will give them all the nutrition they need. When you start to feed them, we suggest that you begin by giving them a small handful every other day (chopped up into small pieces), and place it in each corner sequentially; you should see the worms feeding on the older food first. (Worms like it slightly mouldy) If after a week you see none of the food gone then stop feeding until you see the food being eaten. This will ensure that your food doesn't go rotten and poison the worms in the initial stages. If they eat it all then you know to put in more food. Please don't worry if your worms seem slow to start, as they will eat all the coir and paper that is supplied.

Always put food under the top layer of newspaper, this allows the worms to feed in the dark, and prevents flies from laying their eggs on any exposed food

Looking After Your Worms

Your worms have been sent with the bedding that they have been living and breeding in. You will also notice that they are packed with damp shredded paper – (they will probably all be curled up inside it). This bedding may contain eggs (look out for small yellow lemon shaped eggs) babies and adults. The eggs grow darker as the worms grow inside, your new worms will settle down into their new home quickly. They will soon start to breed and you will have a population explosion. The more worms, the more you can feed them. Please be aware that in the winter months your worms won't feed or breed as much due to the cold weather, so care should be taken not to overfeed. In the winter if it is really cold, it might be worth bringing your bin into a garage or shed, or if this isn't possible try making an insulated coat out of bubble wrap, and wrapping it around your wormery. Cardboard, carpet and paper also make great insulators. Similarly in the summer keep your wormery away from direct sunlight, as you don't want to cook your worms. Worms like the temperature to be between 12-25 degrees centigrade, and feed and breed best between these temperatures.

Worms need air to live, they breathe through their skin, so it's imperative that they get as much air as possible. A great tip is to add lots of shredded newspaper and corrugated cardboard (egg cartons are excellent). Worms love damp shredded paper, and from our experience, you can never have enough!

Worms also need grit to help with their digestion, crushed dried egg shells work brilliantly, or add a handful of sand and sprinkle over the contents occasionally. Another great tip is to get some insect mesh and place it over the top of the bin (secure with elastic) and leave the lid off (weather permitting) this gives great ventilation, but stops the flies from entering and the worms from escaping. Remember that you need to keep the compost moist for your worms to survive, also to replace the lid at night.

It's also very helpful to bury your food under damp (not soaking) newspaper that is about 1-2 inches deep (try soaking overnight and then squeezing the excess moisture out).

This keeps the wormery moist and dark and keeps those annoying fruit flies away.

You may be eager to empty the liquid from the sump. Please don't worry if it takes ages to appear (sometimes it takes months) again it all depends on how wet your wormery is and what you put in it. Rain will penetrate the lower levels, but compost worms feed near the surface, so will not be affected.

What Is Growing In My Worm Bin?

You may occasionally notice patches of mould in your worm bin. Moulds and fungi are a natural part of the composting process, helping to break down the food waste. Vegetables may sprout in your bin because of all the nutrients present. These things will eventually be consumed by the worms and other organisms.

What Are The Other Creatures In My Worm Bin?

Once your worm bin has been going for a while, you may notice other creatures like white worms, springtail's, and tiny white spider mites in your bin. This is normal; these creatures will not hurt your worms and they help the composting process.

Ants - Ants in the wormery are a good indication that the wormery is too dry. Dampen the compost and fork the nest regularly, the ants should soon move out.

Ants feast on fungi, seeds and small insects.

Bacteria - One of the smallest and most numerous organism in the Wormery. Bacteria are responsible for most of the decomposition.

Beetles - Beetles often eat earthworms and other insects so should be removed.

Centipedes - A Centipede's body has 15 or more segments with one pair of legs on each segment.

Centipedes eat small worms, insect larvae, newly hatched earthworms, and spiders. If you find them it is best to try and remove them.

Fruit Flies – Very small brown flies. They won't harm the worms but can be a bit of a nuisance, as when you open up your wormery, a cloud of them appear.

Obviously they are attracted to the vegetable matter so eradicating them is virtually impossible. There are however a few steps to bring them under control. 1) Try to bury your food, the fly's lay their eggs on the food, so if its under a layer of compost, they wont be able to get to it. 2) Put a covering over the food like a carpet cut to size, again this will help keep the flies at bay. Or make sure all vegetation is buried by at least 2.5 cm of shredded paper .

The fruit flies eggs often get into your wormery on the fruit / vegetable peelings. Boiling, freezing or microwaving can help solve the problem (and help the vegetables compost quicker).

Flies can be trapped in a jar with a holed lid, and filled with a sweet fruity liquid.

Millipedes - Millipedes eat decaying matter. Aids composting

Mould / Fungi - As food starts to decay it may get covered in mould or fungi. helps with the decomposition - very good in a wormery

Nematodes - tiny transparent microscopic worms. Nematodes are very beneficial in a wormery. It has been estimated that a rotting apple contains 90,000. Nematodes feed on bacteria and fungi.

Pot worms – Small threadlike white worms, likes slightly acidic conditions, aids composting

Slugs / Snails - Some species are beneficial - however some species will eat earthworms. therefore remove from the wormery

Mites – Small white / red mites that can appear overnight in their hundreds – They like moist conditions, and may be an indication that your wormery is too wet. Add dry newspaper. Aids composting

Spiders - Generally not a problem (will eat the flies !)

Springtail's - Springtail's are small wingless insects that jump when disturbed, they have a small spring-like structure under the belly that catapults them into the air. Springtail's feed on fungi. - aids composting

Woodlice - Woodlice chew up waste and expel it like worms, an interesting fact is that woodlice eat their own faeces as they need the copper it contains. Aids composting

Does It Matter Where I Keep My Wormery?

It can be kept almost anywhere. Worms prefer a temperature of between 12C to 25C. They are best kept where the temperature doesn't vary too widely; a shed or garage is suitable and they don't require light. They can also be kept outdoors so long as they are kept in a sheltered position away from strong winds, and out of direct sunlight. In the winter its advisable to insulate the bin, the easiest way to do this is to cover with bubble wrap.