

Worm Starter Mix

- 1) Start your preferred container with pre-shredded, moistened and barely wrung out cardboard. Rule of thumb is you should only be able to squeeze 2 or 3 drops of water out of your bedding material. If you have some shredded paper add that dry. In a small tote container for indoor composting, I prefer an 80/20 mix. 80% cardboard to 20% newspaper. Fluff the cardboard and newspaper.
- 2) Dump your bag of Worm Starter Mix into the container of cardboard/newspaper, now is a good time to put your cocoons in the mix as well. Mix up the mixture pretty good so it is all blended together.
- 3) You can then dump the contents of the worm container on top. If you don't add a cover now place the bin somewhere where there is light (outside for 15 to 20 minutes) and the worms will naturally dive down to escape the light.
- 4) Top coverings: Shredded DRY newspaper or cardboard or DRY leaves are great coverings as they allow some airflow to the bin and also keep it dark for the worms. As time goes by you will be able to mix the top into the bottom mixture and then add new dry covering.
- 5) Check your bin every few days and spritz with water to keep the moisture level up.. (spray bottle OR if you don't have a spray bottle fill a jar with water and place your fingers over the opening to control the water flow and gently water the bin) if you accidentally add too much water, don't fret...just add some more dry bedding.
- 6) DO NOT place any food or more bedding into the container for at least a week. Give the worm's time to adjust to their new surroundings. You can peek at them, but don't disturb. Worms can thrive on neglect.
- 7) After a week you will see that the bin contents have settled down some and the worms are very happy chowing down on the cardboard. At this time you can start adding small quantities of food for them. ALWAYS bury the food and ALWAYS put in a different spot and it is advisable to place dry cardboard under the food scraps. A water bottle with a mister will come in handy here or the jar trick mentioned above.
- 8) When the cardboard/newspaper starts looking like it is "going away" or a lot less of it then you will need to add more bedding material WITH the food at each feeding time. I put the food in the bin on top of DRY cardboard so the cardboard will absorb the wetness of the decomposing food. **Always** cover any food with existing bedding material. Then add your preferred choice of dry bedding material on top (shredded cardboard or newspaper, leaves or even a sheet of cardboard)

Worms Love:

Coffee grounds & filters
Fruits
Tea bags
Vegetables
Autumn Leaves (crumbled/mulched)
Cardboard

Worms Hate:

Meat
Dairy
Oils
Citrus fruit/peels
Shiny/slick newsprint
Broccoli (avoid in a small bin, unpleasant smells)

- Coffee grounds will HEAT up your bin so put them in a thin layer on one side of the bin only, this will allow the worms to retreat to the opposite side if it get too hot for them.
- The easiest way to shred cardboard if you don't have a paper shredder to do it for you is to wet it first. Several ways: 1) put in bathtub and let soak for a few hours 2) Put big chunks in a 5 gallon bucket full of water and let soak for a few hours 3) put in a pile outside and wet with garden hose.
- You can also use as a feed/bedding material as these items are both, but you may not want to use inside your house. Aged horse manure, rinsed rabbit manure (rabbit urine is very high in ammonia), aged cow manure.