



# **Worm Farming**

## **Beginners Guide to Starting a Worm Farm**

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## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	3
Composting .....	5
Worms You Can Use .....	6
Benefits Of Worm Farming .....	7
Worm Farm Design.....	8
Vermicomposting.....	9
Small And Large Scale Worm Farms .....	10
Food And Feeding.....	13
How The Worm Population Is Controlled .....	15
Worm Farming Issues .....	16
Other Things You Can Do With Compost.....	18
Starting A Worm Farm Business .....	20
How To Be Successful With Your Worm Farm .....	23
Resources .....	26

## **Introduction**

Why would someone be interested in starting a worm farm? Nowadays, there are many people that are concerned about the environment. Worms fit right in because they provide fertilization to the earth.

The downside of that is there are not as many around. The chemicals that farmers use help to grow their plants. These chemicals do not agree with the worms and therefore they die off the face of the earth. However, there is an underlying picture: using worms would also help plants to grow naturally.

### **Fish Bait**

For a long time, worms have been used as bait in order to catch fish. They are considered to be some of the best bait to use. It's actually cheaper to have a worm farm than to constantly buy worms when you're ready to fish. If you have more bait than you need, there are plenty of fishermen that would be grateful to buy some worms.

### **Leisurely Fun**

Some people create worm farms just as something to do. They can have a lot of fun with creating them. Worm farming can be something to do in your downtime and can help you to relax. It doesn't take a lot of money to start, and once you get into it, you may not want to stop. In fact, you may want to start your own worm farm business if you like it so much.

When some people initially think of worms, they are not something to behold. Of course, they are creatures of the earth, so they are here for a purpose. Nowadays, with lots of people getting involved with the environment and the green concept, worm farming has been introduced as a way to create potting soil in your own home.

Worm farming allows you to use scraps from fruits and vegetables and create potting soil for plants that you have in your garden or inside your home. The good thing about this is that anyone can do it, regardless whether you have a home or an apartment.

If you are an apartment dweller, this would really work out in your favor. Normally, if you had plenty of plants you wanted to maintain, you would not have a backyard to take care of them. With worm farming, having a backyard is not necessary.

In order to start, you will need the following items:

A container that is made of wood or plastic

A cover for the container that is made plastic, burlap or newspaper

Worms (Red Worms or Earthworms)

Material for bedding purposes (i.e., newspaper, cardboard—the corrugated kind)

Waste matter, such as scraps and peelings from vegetables, egg cartons made from cardboard material and tea bags; any organic waste matter is fine to use

A wood or plastic container is very suitable to use. Some have suggested containers made from metal, but some sources fear that's not a good idea. Metal can cause contaminants to get into the compost. That can mess up the worm farming process altogether.

Your best bet is to use a plastic storage bin that you can see through. Whether you use that or a wooden container, holes will have to be drilled for drainage purposes. The holes should be placed on the sides and the bottom of the container.

You can also purchase containers that are made for that purpose. In that case, you may need more than one container because you will have to keep the worms in one and the worm castings in another.

For the bedding, you will need to tear the newspaper or cardboard material in strips that measure one to two inches long. Moisten them really good, but not so where they are drenched. If you don't want to do that, you can also use straw or decomposed compost. There are even some people that will use grass clippings.

As far as the scraps are concerned, you should only use what is recommended. Using waste from animals is prohibited. Waste from animals can have contaminants and can also be a breeding ground from unwanted pests as you are building your worm farm.

The bedding has to be set up correctly because worms depend on it for their food source. It should be loose enough for the worms to move around and have breathing room. In addition to using newspaper or cardboard material, you can also use sawdust, burlap, hay, manure that has aged and dried leaves.

People that create a worm farm will use the matte kind of newspaper. Phone books are good to use. Any glossy paper is not recommended. Also paper that comes from junk mail and copy paper is not a good idea. They can be mixed with harmful toxins that can mess up the composting processing.

In addition to that, cardboard that is coated with plastic or wax is not good to use. So, using milk cartons is out of the question. Basically, any type of material that decomposes quickly is ok to use.

## Composting

If you have organic waste, you can use the composting method to recycle it. How this works is the worms consume the waste. After they have eaten it, it can be used to fertilize a garden. The best things to use are food waste from fruit and vegetables.

As they are mixed in the worm compost, your fruit and vegetables will grow larger. Using the fertilizer, you will have fresh food items to eat. When you have a worm farm, you will have plenty of compost worms to work with.

Here are some things to keep in mind regarding composting:

- Compost piles should always be moist. Too much water can mess it up. It should not be wet to the point where there is an excess; otherwise, it will have to be drained.
- Aeration of the compost pile is when you turn it continuously on a regular basis. When you do that, you allow oxygen to come in on the process. Organic materials will decompose quicker as long as the oxygen is there.
- There should be a balance of carbon and nitrogen in the compost pile. Having too much of either can throw it off kilter. A mixture of organic material and grass trimmings will help it to be balanced. Your compost will then grow properly.
- Composting works to keep pests and plant diseases away. In addition to that, it works to reduce or get rid of the use of fertilizers that contain chemicals. Soil is remediated in a cost-effective manner. Any hazardous waste or toxins are removed.

With the emergence of the “green revolution”, composting with worm farms is a good choice. Adults and children can both benefit from this and learn more about the environment in the process. Not to mention other things that are related to this, such as having waste placed in dumps and landfills.

Nowadays with so many chemicals and other factors causing different areas to be polluted, it’s a wonder that people are still able to breathe through the mess. Some people would have never thought how much food scraps and other viable waste could make a difference in a person’s life.

In addition to the worm farms, plants and vegetables can now have an improved quality of life because of composting. The environment will greatly appreciate it.

## Worms You Can Use

Of course, in order to have a worm farm, you will need to have worms. Red worms and earthworms have both been mentioned as ones to use for your worm farm. However, the red worms, or red wigglers as they are called, are better to use than earthworms.

Red wigglers are better because they reproduce easily. They also provide plenty of nutrients that enrich the soil. Even though earthworms are easier to find, they have proven not to produce well while they are in the soil.

The red ones, on the other hand, have proven to be more capable of production in worm farms. They can endure different temperatures and stay in enclosed spaces. They can also process plenty of waste materials.

Some worms are better to help with composting than others. That's why it's imperative to know which ones to use for your worm farm. Worms can also be used for live bait for a worm farm.

Another species that can be used for worm farming is the European Nightcrawler. This type of worm is also used for animals such as birds and aquarium fish. They are also used for composting; however, they are better used as live bait.

The Red Wiggler and the Nightcrawlers can be put in gardens and lawns. They work to fertilize and enrich the soil.

Even though there are plenty of different worm species, these two are the ones that most people use and are the easiest to get. You can also find them as young and adult worms. Or you can find them still in the egg waiting to come out. Once the eggs are hatched, you will find more worms per egg.

When you get the right worm for your worm farm, they will be the ones that will make it successful. You will find that most are known to compost discarded waste; there are others that can help your worm farm stand out.

## Benefits Of Worm Farming

You can benefit from worm farming. Animals get their food from worms. You can also visit a museum and you will find a worm farm on display. Or a student could use a worm farm as a project for school. Worm farms can be used as treats for birds or fish.

Having a worm farm can help to show others how you can recycle waste. They are also an asset to the economy for buying and selling. When used in soil, worm farms help to keep the soil rich and healthy. In turn, equipment and other supplies will be needed in order to maintain land on the farm.

Worm farms can also help catfish farms because catfish farms could have their own worm farms. Fishermen can use worm farms by using the worms instead of artificial bait in order to catch fish. Artificial bait also contributes to pollution in lakes, ponds and rivers. Chickens in chicken houses could use worm farms for feeding purposes.

It looks like no matter where you turn, there is someone or some animal that can benefit from having a worm farm. That is a good thing because it helps to keep the environment clean. You don't have to deal with the toxic items that pollute our areas.

Also, worms are affiliated with the vegetables and fruit that we eat. The plants come from the soil that the worms helped to fertilize. This helps the soil to stay healthy. Worms and worm farms have helped gardeners for many years because it has helped their compost piles, flower beds and vegetable gardens.

People that take interest in worm farms can get together and share ideas. Different kinds of people can connect and help one another with helping the environment. People can get together in groups and share their experiences about dealing with worms and worm farms.

People in other countries are familiar with worms and eat them as regular food. It's really interesting when you start to look beyond the usual and see how much worms and worm farms really help the environment.

## **Worm Farm Design**

It was briefly mentioned at the beginning of this report that you don't need a lot of space in order to start a worm farm. In fact, you can do this in your kitchen area if you wanted to. You don't need a lot of space; just enough so that you can place the container in a safe area.

Even though there are different designs in how you can set up the worm farm, the easiest way to do it is to start it on the ground. Some larger worm farms use a concrete pad, but you don't have to do that, especially since you're just starting out.

Larger worm farms create what are called "windrows". Windrows are worm farms that are made into long rows. They create so many of these.

The worms will come and produce, leaving castings in the first row. They will continue with the second row, and so on. In order to keep the worms enclosed, some people will use bricks or wooden boards.

Don't forget about the cover. You will always need to have one on the container. Worms detest light. They can produce better when it's dark and moist.

If you don't want to make your own worm farm, you can get a design that is already created. There are different types that can be used inside your home or apartment. If you have a home, the worm farm is usually kept in the basement. However, there have been other places where people will secure them.

As mentioned earlier, the kitchen area is also ideal; in fact, you can secure them under your kitchen sink, if you wish. This way, you will be able to get to the organic and vegetable scraps quicker. So, with this settled, you can now start with your vermicomposting.

# Vermicomposting

Vermicomposting is the process of producing vermicompost. Vermicompost comes from organic matter that is produced by worms ( red wigglers). Using vermicompost for your worm farm, you are assured of having the best soil. That's because vermicompost contains plenty of nutrients, conditioning and fertilizing from organic matter.

Red Wigglers are used as composting worms. Red Wigglers usually come from rich soil found in North America and Europe They like to produce soil with compost and manure piles. If you need to get some of these worms, they can be found at bait shops and you can get them through mail order.

## Properties

Vermicompost contains lots of microbial life. This helps the nutrients to be broken down in the soil and turned into forms that are available for plants. You will find that worm castings have mucus in them.

The mucus is used to keep the nutrients around while watering is going on. Mucus is also good for containing moisture more so than regular soil. That's why it's so easy for fruit and seed pits can easily grow in vermicompost.

You will find little seeds in vermicompost that are made from scraps from the kitchen. Some of these include eggplants and tomatoes. These seeds will grow out within a few weeks.

The soil has some advantages by using vermicompost in worm farms. Some of them are:

- Enrichment of soil
- Good at holding a certain amount
- The root growth is enhanced
- The structure is enhanced
- Improvement in the physical look

You can also make worm tea from vermicompost. Use that and water so that the mixture can steep for several hours or days. After it has done that, you can use the liquid mixture as a fertilizer. You can also go to the hardware store or plant nurseries and purchase a home kit that does the same thing.

## Small And Large Scale Worm Farms

When you are creating a worm farm with a vermicomposting bin, make sure that the bedding is moist and you can add the worms. If you live in warm or hot climates, make sure that the bin is not in the direct sunlight path. You are allowed to add waste daily or weekly, depending on your needs.

When the worms first begin to eat, they consume up to at least half of what they weigh. After they have gotten accustomed to the feedings, they can eat up to all of what they weigh. The old food should be consumed by the worms before new food is added. Or if you have another place in the bin, you can set the new food aside.

Many people start worm farms on a small scale. It's a good idea to have a collection tray underneath the container for the drainage. You don't want it spilling all over the place. If you use a plastic bin, they will have more drainage because they are not made to absorb. The wooden ones will have less drainage.

If you want to use a small bin, keep in mind where you will store it and how the worms will be fed. The small bins can be set up in one of three ways:

- **Continuous vertical flow** – The trays are stacked up vertically. The first tray that gets filled is the one at the bottom. However when the tray gets full, it is not harvested. On the top of that tray will be thick layer of bedding. The tray above that one will contain organic matter.

The bottom tray is also used for the worms so that they can complete composting the materials. Then they shift to the next one above it. After the worms have finished with the bottom tray, the vermicompost can be taken up. When using the bins in this manner, the harvesting method is easier.

- **Continuous horizontal flow** – The trays are stacked up horizontally. With this method, the worms tend to move toward food so that it will be easier for harvesting purposes. The bin is usually longer in length. A chicken wire screen divides the bin into two parts.

When one half gets full, the other half will contain organic matter and bedding. The worms will travel to the other side of the bin that contains the food. At that time, the compost can be taken up.

- **Non-continuous** – This set up uses a container that is not divided in two. At the bottom there is bedding that is used as a liner. After that, organic matter used for composting, along with worms are placed next. Then another layer of bedding is included on top of that.

When that's complete, composting will begin with the bedding and organic matter. Using this kind of bin is just right because it is small in size and doesn't take up a lot of

room. However, when it's time to harvest, you have to empty out all of the worms and materials.

Building worm farms on a large scale are usually reserved for those who are looking to build a business. There are two ways that this can be done. The windrow is the more common of the two.

Windrows were briefly discussed in the beginning of this guide. They serve the purpose of having plenty of organic matter for the worms to have. When the windrows use only one side for feeding the worms, a wave motion is put into place.

After the one-sided feed has taken place, the wave motion starts when that side of the worm bed expands and pushes across. There are plenty of castings on the back of the worm bed and can be sold.

The second large scale method for vermicomposting is a worm bed that is raised. Or it can be built as a system that has a flow-through set up. On the top of the bed, the worms eat about an inch of food that is laid across the top.

The leftover castings are harvested by using a breaker bar that pulls them across a large mesh screen. This screen is used to act as the worm bed's base. With the flow-through set up, red worms remain on the surface and gravitate toward the new area of food.

Using this set up means that worms and castings are not separated before packaging. This set up is better used indoors and is the best choice for creating worm farms in warmer weather.

In order for the bins to be maintained properly, it's important that there is oxygen so that worms and composting microorganisms can work. What you need to do is take out the composted materials and make sure that the bins have holes.

If you don't want to do that, then you can use bins that have a continuous flow. The key is no matter what you use, there should be enough oxygen in order for the process to work correctly. In the event the lack of oxygen is apparent, you will notice a powerful odor and the environment for the worms becomes toxic, which can pose a danger to them.

Maintaining the bins also includes checking the moisture of the bedding to make sure it's adequate. Along with that, you will also need to check for the flow of oxygen. This should be done at least at least once or twice a week. It's important that the moisture stays at an optimum level.

Depending on the kind of bin you use, you will have to maintain it differently. For instance, if you use a continuous flow bin, you may have to sprinkle water in the bedding in order for it to stay moist.

This is because a continuous flow bin does not hold extra liquid. With a non-continuous flow bin, the extra liquid can be released with a tap. You don't have to discard of it. In fact, it can be used as food for plants.

If you have compost that has a lot of acid in it, you can add crushed eggshells and vegetable matter to combat that problem.

The temperature should be between 55 to 70 degrees Fahrenheit when using worms in composting systems. The bedding should not be in freezing temperatures or go above 89.6 degrees Fahrenheit. Anything within these ranges signifies that it's ok to have indoor vermicomposting in your home. The only exception is if you reside in a tropical climate.

## Food And Feeding

The waste that is used for the worms has a mixture of carbon and nitrogen. It must be mixed together and formed to create the appropriate ratio. You will find more carbon in shredded paper.

You will find more nitrogen in food scraps, which is also considered green matter. There is also lots of protein in food waste. If you have food waste that consists of scraps from fruit and vegetables and eliminates vegetables that are high in protein along with animal matter, you will not have much nitrogen in your vermicompost.

There are so many different food waste items you can use to feed the worms. As long as you don't use animal matter, then you're fine. You don't want to worms to digest unhealthy contaminants. In addition to what was mentioned before, you can also use paper filters, coffee grounds, plate scraping, tea bags, vegetable peels, fruit that is rotting with the exception of citrus peel.

You don't have to grind them, because they will be softened by the microorganisms that are already in the bin. However, the composting process can be quickened if you chop up the vegetable scraps and fruit. If you use a lot of dry food, such as bread that is molded and covered with bedding, use some water that has been purified to make the mixture moist.

Make sure that you don't add too much food waste. Otherwise, the mixture is not good for the worms to eat. Avoid using beans because they are high in protein. Worms do not need to have a lot of protein in their system.

Actually, the best things for them to have are fruit and vegetable matter. Do not use grains or food that had been prepared beforehand. You should stir the mixture so that the worms will have enough oxygen and if the bin is too moist, add more bedding to dry it a little.

Some people use carrot tops and tomato leaves to use in the mixture. Putting a small amount of garden soil provides the worms with the assistance they need to easily digest the food waste.

Other things that you should not include would be things that have been sprayed with pesticides, such as grass clippings. If there is a lot of oil or fat in the mixture, it will be difficult for the worms to breathe. They breathe through their skin.

Worms also detest digesting foods that have a lot of spices and salt. If you do add foods that have acid or starch, they should only be done in moderation. There would be an imbalance if you placed a lot of this in the mixture.

When you are feeding the bin, there are two ways that you can go about doing this. One is called top feeding. Top feeding is when there is organic matter right on top of the current layer of bedding.

Then there is another layer that covers it. For every bin feeding, this is the procedure that is done. The other type of feeding is called pocket feeding. Pocket feeding has a top layer of bedding where there is food buried under it. The food does not stay in the same place all of the time.

The bin gets rotated, which allows the worms a chance for the food to be decomposed in the pockets that were already fed. When the top layer of bedding is empty, more food is added.

When vericomposting, both methods are used together. If there is good that is still buried under the bedding, there should be bedding material to cover it. Otherwise, you're looking at a visit from fruit flies.

You will know that the vermicompost has the go ahead to be harvested when you don't see a lot of scraps left, bedding or food that was not eaten. However, you may see noticeable things such as pits from a peach, skins from a melon, or twigs.

Harvesting can be done in different ways. It just depends on how the vermicompost will be utilized. It also has to do with whether or not you want to keep a lot of the worms and their eggs away from the vermicompost.

One thing that you cannot do with the worms is to overfeed them. This is an issue that can cause foul odors and the occurrence of pests. Remember to feed them in moderation, preferably providing them with small morsels of food waste.

Also, don't forget to provide them with new food only after the old food is almost or just about gone. Since worms are small and eat over half of what they weigh every day, even the slightest bit of overfeeding could cause issues for the worm farm.

Worms are able to produce more worms every few months. It's important that you watch out for the number of worms on the scene so that you are providing them with enough food scraps.

When you are feeding the worms well, they will be content and want to produce plenty of composted castings to make the soil rich. Not only will this benefit the worm, it will benefit you as well.

## How The Worm Population Is Controlled

The worm population is controlled with three different factors:

- The availability of food
- Requirements needed for space
- The environment

With the worms being fed on a regular basis in a small space, the worms are able to whittle it down and take in the nutrients. Whatever they don't eat, they push it out of their system. During worm reproduction, more worms struggle at the chance to get food.

When the worms become more populated, there must be more food available for them. In addition to that, they will also need more space and the bedding must be changed in order to stay fresh.

All worms push castings out of their system. Castings is mucus that contain small grain particles. When they sit out in the open, they become hard because they have been exposed to the air. Even with that, the mucus itself does not separate or break down easily.

What it does is it breaks up the soil. When this happens, the drainage system works better. So you can see from this transition that the castings serve the purpose of being an organic soil conditioner in addition to being a fertilizer.

The purpose of keeping plenty of worms is justified in order for the population to grow. When you have enough worms available, the vermicompost will have to be harvested at a slightly lower grade. Otherwise, the castings will become toxic. Worms that have moved away from the casts make the process larger. In fact, many worms may end up living longer.

## Worm Farming Issues

If you start to have issues with your worm farm, it could be a number of different reasons, depending on the problem.

### Bugs

If you have bugs or other pests, you should have a container that has a tight lid. The lid will stop a lot of pests from getting in the worm farm and cause contamination. However, there will be a few that try to get in anyway. People that create worm farms usually see small vinegar flies. These kinds of flies come from the worms being overfed. If there is a lot of food, you will see larger flies.

Ants tend to be another problem. This means that the soil is probably too dry. You can pour some water into the soil to provide moisture. This will also help to get rid of the ants. If you have a worm farm that has legs, put some Vaseline on the legs to keep the ants from climbing up.

If you have meat (you really shouldn't have it for the worms), you will see maggots. Get rid of the meat and don't feed anymore to the worms. You can get rid of maggots by putting a piece of bread soaked in milk in the worm farm. When the maggots stick to the bread, you can remove it.

Here are some other ways that you can stop ants from contaminating your worm farm along with some other worm farming issues:

- If your worm farm has too much acid, add some water and lime where they are congregating.
- If there is a lot of rain, remove the excess water so that your worms won't drown in the worm farm. They should be at the top of the worm farm to get themselves straight. Another thing you can do to soak up the excess is to add paper and cardboard.
- Another thing you can do for a smelly worm farm is to wrap the extra worm food in newspaper. Place it in a cool area or the refrigerator for a while.
- Another way to keep worms cool if the temperature is extremely hot is to use a Hessian cloth.
- In order for worms to breed, they need to stay in the shade.

Using these tips and others in this guide can help you keep your worms healthy and able to produce rich soil for your worm farm.

If you see that worms are trying to leave, it could be that they don't like where they are and want to go elsewhere. Some of the contributing factors could be dry soil or not enough food for them.

to eat. Or the soil could be too moist and the worms are uncomfortable. Whatever it is, the problem will have to be corrected as soon as possible.

If there is dry soil, add fresh water to the worm farm. If the soil has too much moisture, remove the excess and replace the farm with new bedding. Make sure to find out whether the extra moisture is coming from and get rid of it.

Make sure that there is enough food for the worms to eat and that they are staying in an area where the temperature is comfortable.

# Other Things You Can Do With Compost

## Compost Garden

You can use compost for other things besides a worm farm. The decomposed organic waste is already used as a fertilizer for plants and enriching the soil in gardens. When the soil is good, you will find that it drains properly. When you include compost in the soil, the soil will maintain its texture and drainage system.

You will find plenty of nutrients in compost. Using that will help to maintain plants. The plants don't get the nutrients at once because they don't require a lot at once. It's better for them to get nutrients in moderation.

From an environmental standpoint, the compost keeps certain materials away from landfills. You can use the same materials as you would use for your worm farm. They include, cardboard, coffee grounds, vegetable peelings, eggshells, tea bags, egg cartons, etc.

Please be aware that there are some things that should not be included in the compost. Animals are not to be included, nor should meat. It can contaminate the compost and it would not be suitable for use.

When you create the compost, the pile can be placed on the ground, if you have an area to do that. Keep it out of the shade and dampness. Keep putting things in the piles and allow it to manifest. It may take a while, and the compost that is completed will be on the bottom while the newer items will be on the top.

To keep everything together, use a shovel. This will hasten the decomposition and keep the items together. You can put the compost in a box or a bin. Or you can even use an old garbage can and inset holes in them. Or you can go and purchase a bin for your mixture. You should rotate the mixture several times. It can be done on a regular basis, whether you add more items or not.

You will be glad that you used this natural method for your plants and also helping to save the environment at the same time.

## Compost Tea

Please be mindful, this is not tea that you can drink. Don't let the color fool you. As you are making this special tea, please adhere to the following instructions.

1. Take a look at the compost to see if you can use it. You can even use stuff that is not composted all of the way. Just take a handful and pull it out of the pile.

2. Fill up some compost in a bag made from cloth. The bag should not be larger than a medium size. You want to be able to carry it without any problems.
3. Place the bag in a container that is big enough to hold it. Let it sit up to three days.
4. When the water turns dark brown, add more clear water so that the color will lighten up enough to look like regular tea. Use this mixture for plants.
5. The same compost bag can be used several times over.
6. You will know when to stop using the bag when the water is no longer a dark brown color. Also, you will not have any more nutrients.

Please note that this compost tea can be used for potted plants and plants that are in a garden. It can be used for plants that grow indoors and outdoors.

If you want, you can get a pump from a home aquarium. Use the hose to make bubbles on the top.

## Starting A Worm Farm Business

Have you ever thought about having a worm farm business? Not only can you start one for yourself, but you can actually set up a small side business. However, you have to make sure that you can set up your own worm farm without any issues. Of course, there may be problems after it's all said and done, but as long as you know what you're doing, then you should be ok.

There are some things that you need to check out prior to you starting this venture. Make sure that you have the right kind of containers, bedding materials, food waste materials, etc. You must also check out the climate wherever you live. It's important that the worms are in a comfortable environment without it being too hot or too cold.

You will also need to be familiar with vermiculture. Vermiculture is when you use worms to expedite the composting process. It doesn't take a lot of room and the process is odorless.

You should acquire as much experience as you can about this process and worm farming in general before you decide to tackle worm farms on a larger scale. You need to show potential customers that you know what you're doing.

After you have gotten the worm farming process to a science, you can now start to expand into a business venture. If you are going to have a larger volume castings and worms, you will need to have enough materials in order to meet your demand.

In order to do that, you will need to find suppliers that can meet your demand for materials and other items related to your business. Being able to keep materials in stock will help you to have a successful business.

Of course, you must have a valid business license and meet the requirements of starting up a business wherever you live. You may have to get a separate permit in order to sell worms and the accessories needed in relation to the worm farms.

After you have set up your inventory, you will need customers. Even though you know you have good materials and products for sale, potential customers don't know that—at least not just yet. You will have to get out and pound the pavement for customers.

There is no doubt that you will have to spend money on advertising. You have to make sure that the advertising is effective and that you are getting your money's worth. You can start out with word of mouth.

This form of advertising has always been one of the best known ways to get the word out. However, that can only go so far. You will have to diversify your efforts to advertise and get the word out.

Since you're just starting out, you may not want to pay for radio commercials, unless you have the money to do it. The same thing can be said for newspapers or magazines. You have to look at what money you have available in order to do this. Advertising costs do add up once it's all said and done.

One of the cheaper ways to advertise your worm farm business is to create flyers. You can make several stacks and pass them out. Have a strategy as to where you want to place them. It's easy to put them under the windshield wipers, but is that the best way to make the most of your money?

Besides, there is a liability factor there. What if you accidentally break a part on the windshield wiper while trying to stick a flyer under it? Now you are responsible for replacing that part of the wiper. So using that method may not be as effective. Plus, there may be only 10 people out of hundreds of vehicles that are parked that may be interested in what you have to offer.

Another thing is if someone were to see you place a flyer on their vehicle, they may suspect you of trying to steal it. Alternative places where you can possibly leave your flyers include laundromats, grocery stores and discount stores just to name a few. Be sure to get permission from the owners prior to doing this. They may have a no solicitation policy at their business.

Have you ever thought about going to the library and giving a lecture on worm farming? There are some children that may be interested in setting one up. There are children who are passionate about caring for the environment. This would be a good project for them. You can create bookmarks with your business information on it, as not to be obvious that you are advertising.

You can also make signage to advertise your worm farm business. You can make the signage stand out by making it colorful and easy for passersby to look at. It should also look nice so that people will automatically notice as they pass by.

A large sign would work better than a small one because a large one would catch their eye quicker. A plain sign won't do must justice for your business. You need something that will say "Let me check out this place".

You can also use signage that is placed on the doors of vehicles. You see more of this as you are out in public. That is another cost-effective way to get your message across. You can also place online advertisements on places such as Craigslist and other online advertising arena.

If you want to advertise in newspapers, start out with the thrifty ones that you find at restaurants and other places that have them.

You can also set up a booth at a neighborhood farmer's market and advertise that way. You would have to take into account that you would need to pay a fee in order to rent space. Also, make sure to have plenty of materials available to pass out.

It's important that you continue to market and advertise your business. You just can't stop because you have some customers. You want your business to grow and in order to do that, you have to keep advertising for more customers.

One idea you can use to do that is to have a referral program. You would offer your customers a percentage off on materials if the referred one or more people to your business. However, it might be better to do this when you have a solid customer base. Your business still has to bring in profits.

Beware of those supply companies that try to talk you into thinking you can get rich quick from worm farming. It's a process, just like any other business. Eventually, you will make profits, but you don't want to look at it as easy money. Some businesses take longer than others to get going. So, enjoy what you're doing and the profits will come.

## How To Be Successful With Your Worm Farm

Having a worm farm can be a great hobby. At the same time, you would be helping with the green theme by keeping the environment safe. By recycling organic waste from your home, you are in turn creating your own organic fertilizer to use in the soil.

In addition to enriching your worm farm, organic fertilizer can also help if you have a garden. It will help you save money by not having to purchase fertilizer from plant nurseries or other related retailers. Besides with organic fertilizers, you know what you're getting because you made it yourself.

You can make as much as you want without leaving your home. The waste that you would usually discard would be put to good use. This way you would really be helping the environment instead of helping the dumps and landfills to permit toxic odors in urban areas.

Since worm farming is favorable to the environment, you will end up with compost that is rich in substance. Worm castings that come from the compost can also help with the growth of plants or vegetables.

Here are some more tips and reminders that you can use for successful worm farming:

- Make sure that your worm farm has plenty of ventilation. It should not be placed in an area where the temperature is too hot or too cold. Since worms are rather sensitive creatures, they should be placed in a fairly quiet area. Worms are sensitive to a lot of noise and vibrations.
- Keep an eye on how you feed the worms. As the population increases, remember to put more food in the bin.
- The worms should be fed on a regular basis. Use only half of the worm farm when the castings are being harvested. After that process, place new scraps on that side. Make sure to include moist new bedding and eggshells. Don't forget that your castings can be used for your plants and garden.
- The soil from worm farm should always remain moist. Any leftover food should be placed in old newspaper. Keep the worm farm from getting excess moisture.
- Any excess worms should be harvested if you are breeding. Use the worm castings for organic fertilizer. The environment will thank you and so will your wallet.
- If you have too many worms in one worm farm, then you may want to create another one. You can create it the same way that you did the initial one and maintain it the same way.

- If you have some extra red worms that you don't need, check with suppliers to see if they will buy some from you.
- Remember that a worm farm is a step to doing other things that are connected with the environment. Just think, you will have healthy plants and a healthy garden just by using the organic compost that you made in the comfort of your own home.

With the “green” revolution already here, worm farming is just one way to contribute to the environment. In addition to individuals, there are farmers that are seeing the benefits of producing and enriching organic fertilizer.

Organic fertilizer has plenty of nutrients; with the fertilizer you get at the store, it can have anything in it. At least with organic fertilizer, you know what you're getting because you made it.

Also, there is a difference in the taste of garden vegetables when using organic fertilizer. The plants and flowers look better and they bring out vibrant colors. As you continue to work with the worm farms, you have a chance to start your own business as a breeder. In addition to that, you can also sell worms for bait.

The vermicomposting experience is something that you have to be serious about. Worms are creatures and they eat food just like everyone else. Taking care of them along with the worm farm is not a difficult concept.

They are only able to eat so much each day. Just remember what to feed and what not to feed them. You don't want to be known for attracting undesirable pests and other visitors.

Any leftover scraps should be buried at least several inches under the dirt. That way, you will not have to deal with flies or fruit flies. Fruit flies are very annoying, and once they come, they seem to be difficult to get rid of.

When burying your food scraps, put them in different places of the bin. You don't want the worms to get comfortable and complacent in the same area. Plus, it's better if each area has some of the castings buried underneath.

Children are always wanting to learn new things, and this is no different. You can show them how the entire process works. They can be inquisitive and eager to get involved. At least you won't have to force their hand to make a worm farm. Doing this can be so much fun. You just have to be committed from beginning to end.

Who would have ever thought that something that we do every day—discarding of certain leftovers and scraps in the garbage could impact the earth so much. This is something that people normally don't think about because they just want to get rid of it.

However, considering it is organic waste—coffee grinds, eggshells, vegetable and fruit scraps or peelings, it should make us rethink what we do with those kinds of food particles. Never in a

million years would some people think that creating worm farms could make such a difference in today's "green world".

## Resources

[http://organicgardening.about.com/od/compost/Making\\_and\\_Using\\_Compost.htm](http://organicgardening.about.com/od/compost/Making_and_Using_Compost.htm), information about composting from the About.com website

<http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/conservation/rrr/composting/index.htm>, information about composting from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

[http://answers.usa.gov/cgi-bin/gsa\\_ict.cfg/php/enduser/std\\_adp.php?p\\_faqid=8449](http://answers.usa.gov/cgi-bin/gsa_ict.cfg/php/enduser/std_adp.php?p_faqid=8449), brief information about composting

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/FEATURE/backyard/compost.html>, U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service

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