

Vermi-Composting: Two Bin Method

A space-saving way to compost indoors using worms

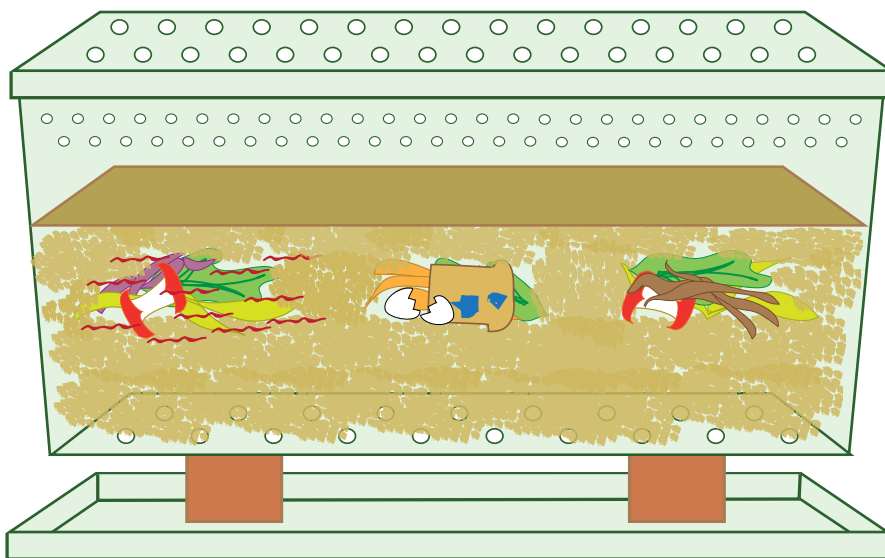


What You Need

- two 8-10 gallon, dark-colored plastic storage bins with lids
- a drill or tool to punch quarter-inch and sixteenth-inch holes in the bins
- bedding material (shredded newsprint, brown leaves, straw, sawdust)
- cardboard
- blocks or bricks
- one pound of red worms (for a list of suppliers, visit <http://www.cityfarmer.org/wormsupl79.html>)
- food scraps excluding meat, dairy, fats, and oils

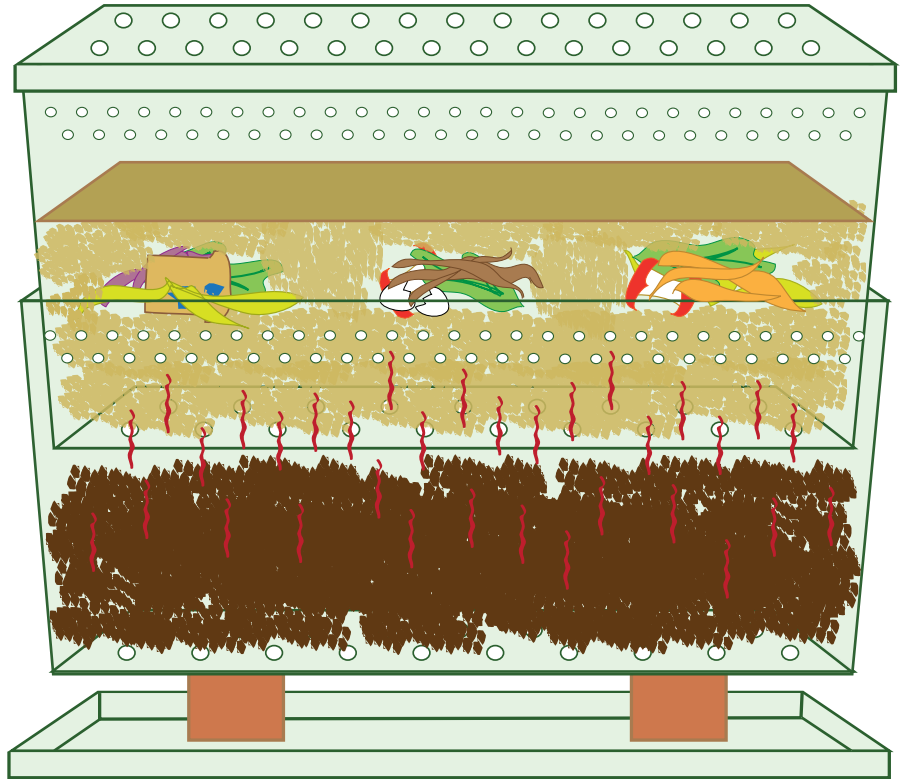
Part One: Assembly of Your Vermi-Composting Bin

1. Drill 20 evenly spaced, quarter-inch holes in the bottom of each bin. Near the top edge of the side of each bin, drill sixteenth-inch holes about one inch apart
2. Moisten bedding until it is as wet and fluffy as a damp sponge, but not soggy. Evenly layer the bedding six inches deep in *one* of the bins.
3. Distribute worms in clumps across the top of the bedding. Wait one hour. If any worms remain on top of the bedding, remove them.
4. In one corner of the bin, lift up the bedding, place food scraps, and generously cover them with bedding.
5. Cover the bedding with a moistened piece of cardboard. Drill about 30 evenly spaced quarter-inch holes in *one* of the lids and place it on the bin.
6. Place the blocks on the remaining lid, then place the bin on the blocks. The lid will act as a tray and catch any excess moisture. The blocks will provide ventilation.
7. Locate the bin in a dark place where the contents can be kept moist and at a temperature of 55°-75°. Ideal locations include basements, garages, balconies, and under kitchen counters. If you keep the bin outdoors, protect it from the sun and rain; move the bin indoors before winter.
8. Each time you bury new food scraps, create a new pile close to the last one. The worms will migrate to the new pile. The worms will also eat the bedding so you will have to add additional bedding as needed.



Part Two: Harvest and Continued Use of Your Vermi-Composter

1. Wait until the bin is full and there are no recognizable food scraps. At this time, place new bedding material and buried food scraps in the second bin. Cover with a moistened piece of cardboard. Remove the lid from the first bin and place it on the second bin. Place the second bin directly on the compost surface of the first bin. You now have a bottom bin and a top bin.
2. In one to two months, the worms will migrate from the bottom bin to the top bin. The bottom bin will now contain compost that is almost worm-free. Gently remove any remaining worms and place them in the top bin. Set the top bin on the blocks. The top bin is now the new bottom bin. You can now repeat from Part One, step 8.
3. The compost in the original bottom bin is now ready for use as a fertilizer. Remove the compost from the bin and use the bin as the future top bin.



Troubleshooting

Problem	Probable Cause	Solutions
worms are dying or trying to escape	too wet	add more bedding
	too dry	moisten bedding
	not enough bedding	harvest bin
unpleasant odor	not enough air	drill more ventilation holes
	too many food scraps	do not add scraps for 1-2 weeks
	too wet	add more bedding
fruit flies	exposed food	bury food in bedding