
EASY INDOOR WORM BIN

Worm Composting in northern climates is best done indoors, and can be done year round. This system is simple to build and maintain.

It's easy to adapt a container you have, or buy one to fit a favourite piece of furniture.

The container should be waterproof and allow holes to be drilled through the material without cracking.

Low, wide bins are preferred as deep bins may putrefy.



Specialized Tools

- Power or hand drill with a 3 to 5 millimetre bit
- eye and hand protection



List of Materials

- a plastic storage bin with secure lid
- bedding material (shredded newspaper, office paper, cardboard, or flyers, dry leaves, paper towels, coffee filters)
- water or other liquids (coffee, tea, juice, etc.)
- a handful of soil or floor sweepings
- composting worms (not garden worms)

Construction Sequence

1. Drill holes 10 cm apart along the top of the bin. Don't drill too many holes at the start – you can add more in a few months if needed. Do not drill holes in the base of the bin.
2. Fill the bin with bedding materials. Tear newspaper along the grain into long, narrow strips and add a handful of autumn leaves and plant stems from the garden (after checking them for insects). The bin should overflow with dry material.
3. Add liquids and fluff the bedding until it's uniformly moist and there is about 2 mm of water remaining at the bottom.
4. Sprinkle soil over bedding and add worms – that's composting worms, not garden worms.

Feed your Worms

Always bury food beneath the bedding. The bedding is an active carbon filter that absorbs odours.

Feed them in a new spot every time.

Feed worms anything from a plant, in moderation. Kitchen scraps are the main ingredient. Too much of one thing will cause problems – citrus may be the first time you experience this. When too much of something makes strong odours, remove some of it and add more moist bedding.

Small pieces decompose more quickly, so chop material to keep the system working well. For example, chopped banana will be devoured before fruit flies can hatch, whereas whole banana peels last weeks and allow fruit flies to hatch in the bin. Yard waste is not recommended, but a bit is fine.

Egg shells are an important addition – don't rinse them, but crush them a bit.

Add small amounts of proteins, avoiding cooked meat. Fingernails, hair from your comb or pet brush, and boogers are great.

Pet droppings from herbivores are fine, but dog and cat waste is hazardous – have a separate bin for that purpose and learn how to safely handle fecal material before you begin.

Keep your Bin Working

- Fluff the bedding to keep the fungi from producing spores and to allow oxygen into the bottom of the bin. Be gentle with the bedding – it's where eggs hatch and babies emerge.
- Maintain a thin layer of moisture at the bottom of the bin. Worms love moisture, but more water means more odours.
- If worms come out of the compost and gather on the walls and lid there is something at the bottom bothering them. Check for heat or acidic pockets and add more moist bedding – do not mix worms into the compost.
- If you see something in the bin you don't recognize, call us for help.

Harvest your Castings

Add compost to your watering can – one tablespoon per litre, stirred well. When the bedding is almost gone and there is a rich, deep layer of compost (about once or twice a year), move everything to one side of the bin and add fresh, moist bedding to the empty side. Feed the worms only in the new bedding. After a month take out the finished compost and add it to your garden.

Don't give up, we can help...

edmonton.ca/compost, compost@edmonton.ca, or 780 496 5526