

## DIY WORM BIN



### Materials

- \* Gallon Plastic Tote (size depends on number of people in household)
  - \* Old screen
  - \* Soil (can be from the garden, should be good quality)
    - \* Dry leaves, crunched up
    - \* Hot Glue Gun
    - \* Sandpaper (any quality)
    - \* 1 Gallon Water
  - \* Packing peanuts (polystyrene not starch!)
    - \* Box Cutter
    - \* Duct tape
    - \* Hardware cloth (optional)
  - \* Garden screen cloth (optional)
    - \* Drill (not shown)

## Step One - Get a bin

The size of the bin depends on how much GOOD waste you produce. It's more important for the bin to be long, as opposed to deep... so keep that in mind! Wigglers feed in the top two inches of the soil. To determine the size of your bin, look at YankeeWorm.Org under "Make the Bin".

## Step Two - Drill holes

Drill small holes all the way around the top for ventilation. I put three lengthwise on each side, and two on each shorter size. I also put some on the bottom for drainage. If you DON'T put in the holes on the bottom of the bin, be extra careful when monitoring the moisture content of your bin. You don't want worm soup!!

**Holes  
On the  
Sides**



**Bottom  
Of the  
Bin ~  
Drainage**

## Step Three - Cut Slits

Worms need oxygen, too. Use a knife to cut narrow slits. Pop out the pieces you cut. Your bin will now look like this :



## Step Four - Screen over the holes

Make sure to sand the plastic to make sure your glue will stick!  
Glue around the edges, allowing the glue to seep through the screen



## Step Five – Create a False Bottom to the bin

Put in the packing peanuts



Cut two pieces of hardware cloth or one piece of window screen the size of the bottom of the bin to create a false bottom. This way, the moisture will drain down and not drown the worms.



I used two pieces of hardware cloth with a garden screen between them, but you can use a single piece of screen if the holes are small enough. Be sure and tape the ends with duct tape, the ends can be really sharp! The tape does not have to be purple, I just like the color.

**\*\*Some mail order companies are nice enough to use biodegradable peanuts that dissolve in water. **DON'T USE THOSE**, you can just put those out in the garden. Test to see if you're using polystyrene by putting some peanuts in a glass of water. If they dissolve, they're starch and don't use them in the bin. If they **DON'T** dissolve, they're okay to use.**

### **Step Six - BEDDING**

For bedding, I use even amounts of old leaves (crumpled up) and soil, with a handful of cornmeal.

Fill your bin about 1/2 way full. You should have at between 8" to 14" of bedding. **NO DEEPER** otherwise you'll crush your worms.

Before you add your worms, you need to moisten your bedding. We used about a gallon of water, but you should see how much your own mix needs. How do you tell how much? The soil should be about as wet as a rung-out sponge. If you squeeze it, you should see the water but it shouldn't drip

### **Step Seven - Add worms**

As mentioned you **CAN'T JUST USE ANY WORM!** You need Red Worms, otherwise known as Red Wigglers. One pound of worms will eat the food scraps of 1-2 people.



Don't mix the worms into the soil - put them on top and the light will cause them to burrow. If you're ordering worms online, they should come with care instructions

You can find Red Wigglers locally at bait stores, and they're available online. Be sure and read up on your worm supplier, there are reviews on GardenWeb. If possible, buy locally. The less your worms have to travel, the happier they'll be.

### **Step Eight - Feed your friends**

Let the worms settle in... give them a couple of days before feeding. Be sure and review what's okay to put in your bin for the worms to eat... and chop everything finely so it's easier for them to process. Cover the 'new' food with a layer of dried leaves or shredded newspaper.

After about 3-6, you'll have beautiful compost and a lot more worms... remove the compost, get more bedding, and start again.

### **How to harvest...**

- 1) Start feeding your worms in just one side of the bin for week or so. Then remove the castings from the other side and hopefully most of the worms will have moved out.
- 2) Push all your compost to one side, and then place fresh bedding/food on the other. Wait about a month and harvest the hopefully worm-free castings on the one side of your bin
- 3) Take your bin outside and dump it all out on a sheet. Make small piles of compost. The worms, being light sensitive, will burrow under the piles. Scoop off the top of each pile (exposing the worms and letting them burrow again) until all you have left are the worms.

**For more information be sure and visit *YankeeWorm.Org!***

**Happy  
Composting!**

