



How to Build a Worm Composting Bin

This step-by-step guide will help you and your students construct a bin for worm composting in your classroom. The worm castings from these bins are potent fertilizers for plants and can be used in your Learning Garden.

Materials Provided:

- One 10-Gallon Plastic Storage Tote and Lid
- Bedding Materials (newspaper, brown paper bags, corrugated cardboard, dried leaves, etc.)
- ½-1lb of red wiggler worms
- 1 handful of garden soil

Materials Needed:

- Students
- Electric drill with 3/16" drill bit
- Spray bottle or watering can
- Water

Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Drill holes into the lid of the tote: Place lid on tote and drill 40-50 holes spaced evenly across the entire lid. Remove and discard any plastic shavings that are stuck to the lid or have fallen into the bin.
2. Prepare bedding: Tear bedding materials into strips about ½" wide. Fill the tote with the shredded bedding until it's full.
3. Wet the bedding: Add water by spraying with a spray bottle or pouring from a container until the bedding material is evenly damp but not soggy. It should feel like a wrung-out sponge, without any puddles in the bottom of the bin. If too much water has been added, add additional dry bedding to absorb the excess water.
4. Add sand or soil: Place a handful of sand or soil into the damp bedding, mixing to distribute throughout the bin.
5. Add the worms: Lift the bedding from one side of the bin, and add all the worms to the bottom of the bin. Cover the worms with the bedding.



Optional Setup Instructions:

1. Keep the bin under a bright light: Some worms will try to flee their bins until they become accommodated to their new home. Worms may not have eyes but they are sensitive to light and will stay put under the bedding if a light is shining into their bed for the first several days in their new home.
2. Add beneficial nematodes: Fruit flies and fungus gnats may find their way into your worm bin. Beneficial nematodes feast on the larvae of these pests and will help eliminate them from your worm bin.

Additional Resources:

1. Cal Recycle Curriculum
<http://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/Education/curriculum/worms/98activities.pdf>
2. Do the Rot Thing: A Teacher's Guide to Compost Activities
http://www.cvsamd.org/uploads/6/1/2/6/6126179/do_the_rot_thing_cvsamd1.pdf
3. Worms Eat Our Garbage: Classroom Activities for a Better Environment
http://www.wormwoman.com/acatalog/Wormwoman_catalog_Worms_Eat_Our_Garbage_36.html