



Worm Factory® Set-up Instructions

1. Read all instructions. Assemble bin immediately so that when the worms arrive there will be food available to them.
2. Place the coconut fiber Bedding Block in a bucket with about 3 quarts of water. Lukewarm water will work faster and feel better when you are ready to handle the fiber.
3. Place one of the feeding trays on top of the collector/base tray. Lay 2-4 sheets of newspaper in the tray to cover the holes (the paper will overlap up onto the sides, this is fine). Use this layer of paper **ONLY** for this first start-up tray; **NEVER** in any of the following trays! Now scoop the coconut fiber out of the bucket in handfuls, squeezing out excess moisture, so that the fiber is about as moist as a wrung-out sponge. You want the bedding to be damp, not dripping wet. Mix several handfuls of rich, dark soil and/or compost with the coir to seed the bedding with the microorganisms that break down the organic material, making it available to the worms. (**DO NOT USE** store bought potting mix or compost because store bought stuff quite often has chemical fertilizers in it. Chemical fertilizer will kill your worms overnight!) Place 2 handfuls of food waste on top of the coir now, so that when the worms arrive there will be food ready for them. Cover with 2-4 inches of shredded and dampened, not dripping newspaper.
4. When your worms arrive, place them onto the surface of the coir fiber, under the layer of shredded moist newspaper. They will quickly disappear under the surface of the bedding. I keep a 3 pronged hand-held garden cultivator on top of my bins and use it to lift up the layer of shredded moist newspaper; it keeps my hands clean.
5. The bedding/waste/shredded newspaper mix/layers may reach the top of this first tray right from the start, **BUT** don't be tempted to put on the next tray for a couple of months. The bedding in the first tray will settle and become more compacted over time. Worms reduce the volume of all this organic material over time by two-thirds to three-quarters of its original volume.
6. When you see the worms actively involved in the waste that you previously fed them, you may then feed them more. **DO NOT OVER FEED!!!** Be sure to cover the exposed food in the uppermost tray with 2-4 inches of damp shredded newspaper. This layer of newspaper is very important for breeding, pest control, C:N ratio, and castings quality. The newspaper will eventually be consumed. Simply replace the shredded paper as needed. If leaving worms unattended, put 6 in. of shredded paper in bin; this will not heat up like food does.

7. **When to add the next tray:**

When the upper tray is converted to a mixture of vermicompost and castings and reaches the top of the tray then it is time to add the next tray. Scrape an inch of compost from the tray and place into the next tray. (DO NOT place flat sheets of newspaper over the holes in any new trays ever again after the first start-up tray.) Feed and cover with 2-4 inches of dampened shredded newspaper.

8. **When to harvest:**

When the 3rd or 5th tray is full, remove and empty the bottom tray using the contents as 20% of any potting mix, soil or compost blend. The now empty tray will become the new upper tray.

9. **Maintenance:**

Worms will migrate down if system gets too wet or hot. We suggest cleaning out the collector tray every other month or so, placing the contents (if any) back into the top level or spray with a hose over a flower bed so as not to waste any vermicompost or tea. DO NOT pour water over your bedding. Mist when paper becomes dry. The design of the bin is such that condensation produced from decomposition provides enough moisture for your system most of the time. If the shredded moist newspaper gets dry you can mist it with water to moisten it.

If you want more WORM CASTINGS TEA simply take a cup of well processed castings from a lower tray and steep in a gallon of water overnight and use within 12-24 hrs. to water plants.



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