

Making Worm Bedding

Start with a brick of coconut coir (about 3"x10"x2") and add about 2 gallons of hot water in an 8+ gallon container. Actually I run 2 to 3 cups of crushed egg shells we save through the blender. I add this and water to rinse out the blender. The coir is used in place of peat as it is less acidic and a renewable resource. The coir breaks down quickly to form a brown soup.

I add to this a handful at a time shredded paper and shredded cardboard followed by mixing so they don't clump, but are coated with coir. I am able to shred cardboard on my 12 sheet fellows from a second hand store. I use it to shred newspaper if I don't have recycled.

When the mix has absorbed most of the water, I add a handful of compost or garden soil as a source of bacteria and fungi. I also add a handful of fine sand for the worms gizzards and a handful of ground limestone or ground eggshells to neutralize acid formed by composting unless you started with eggshells as I do.

This will turn into 5 or 6 gallons of bedding. After soaking an hour or two, I will add more paper if it gives more than a few drops of water when I squeeze a handful or water if not. Worms prefer damp about like a laundry is out of the washer not wet. You can use this immediately or let it sit and start to decompose. If you store it for later use, allow it to get air. The worms will break all of these materials down along with the kitchen scraps you bury in it.

Start by adding several inches of this bedding to the worm bin. If it is a new layer of a vertical migration bin, then place a layer of newspaper to cover most of the bottom. If new add the worms and the bedding they came in on top of the bedding. In established bins you can add bedding as needed or to set up another layer.

You can add kitchen scraps equal to about the weight of the worms. These should be buried in the bedding in one location to inhibit pests like fruit flies. You shouldn't add more food until you check that the last feeding is mostly consumed. Most won't be consumed until they start to rot. The major causes of failure is overfeeding or excess moisture from the added scraps. You can keep dry shredded paper or cardboard on top of the bedding to mix in as needed. This also inhibits pests. You can use a marker like a white stone to note where you last fed and rotate around the bin.

Some people speed decomposition by blending or freezing and thawing their scraps. Freezing also kills fruit fly eggs and other potential pests.

Info on the web:

You Tube- VermiBag Ep 02 "How To Make Great Worm Bedding" ". Watch EP 72 for additional tips", or search the web for info

Facebook Groups like "Vermicomposting-Worm Farming" , " Red Worm Composting (Worm Farming/Vermicomposting)", and my "Tim's Plants, Produce, and Worms". Use the search option on top if you have a specific question.