

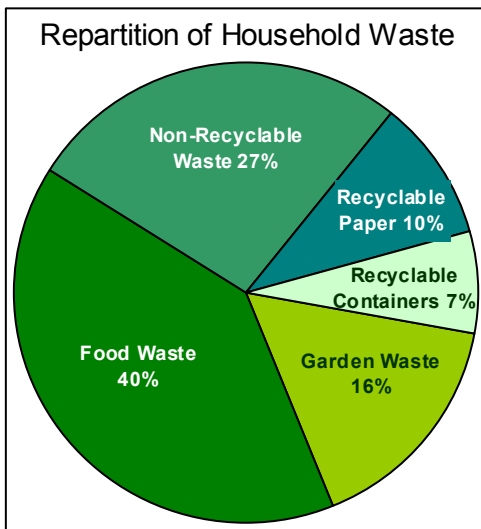
Worm Farming

What is Worm Farming?

Worm farming is a natural way to recycle your organic waste and to convert it into a natural, nourishing fertiliser for your gardens and plants.

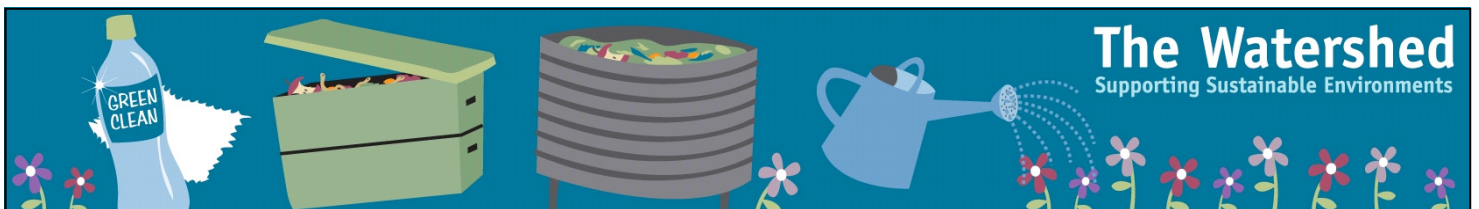
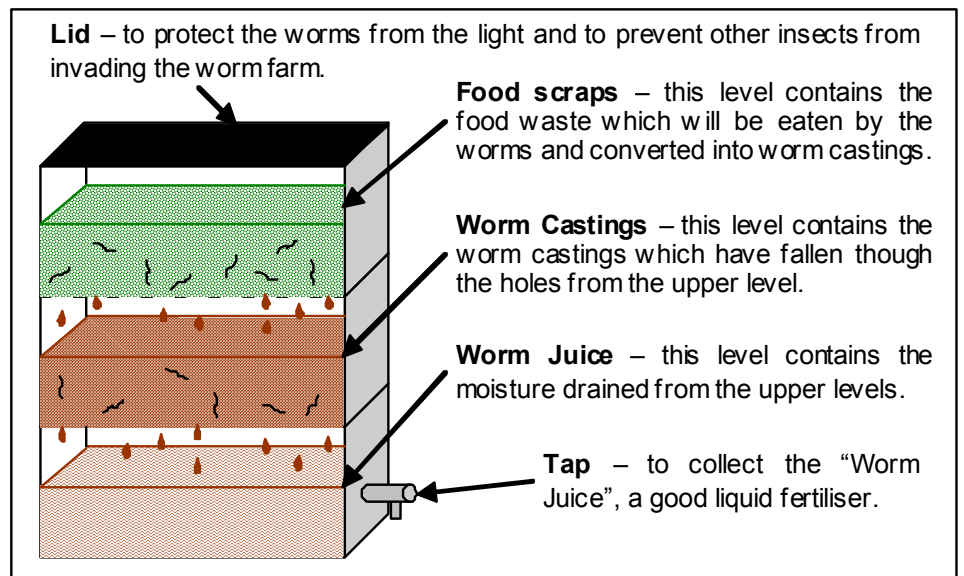
Why Worm Farming?

Organic material (food and garden waste) makes up more than 55% of household waste. When sent to landfill, organic waste decomposes through an anaerobic process, rather than an aerobic process because oxygen can not permeate through the compacted waste. This leads to the generation of liquid leachate which can be environmentally damaging if not managed effectively¹. Anaerobic breakdown also produces toxic methane gas, a greenhouse gas 23 times stronger than carbon dioxide. It can be very expensive to responsibly manage and collect these pollutants. Worm farming can convert potentially toxic rubbish in land fill into a source of rich nutrients for plants that can be safely used around the home. This effectively closes the loop on organic waste.



How does it work?

The food scraps are placed in the top level container of the farm. The worms then eat the waste and break it down into simpler materials. A layer of worm poo ('castings') and worm wee ('worm tea' or 'worm juice') begin to collect in the bottom levels. These are excellent 'complete' nutrient sources for gardens and pot plants.



What to feed your worms?

✓ DO

Food scraps like...

- Vegetables raw and cooked
- Fruit (non-acidic) including skins
- Cooked grains and pulses
- Cooked food (eg. left overs)
- Avocado skins
- Egg shells
- Tea leaves/bags
- Coffee grounds (in moderation)

And also...

- Moistened, non-glossy newspaper
- Cardboard, Egg cartons and Pizza boxes
- Vacuum cleaner dust and hair

✗ DON'T

Some food waste ...

- Uncooked onion & garlic
- Chilli
- Large quantities of tomato
- Acidic fruits (e.g. citrus and pineapple)
- High protein foods (e.g. tofu)
- Animal products (eg. egg, dairy, meat)
- Seafood
- Bread

Uncooked grains and pulses

Or Garden waste like...

- Garden clippings or Eucalyptus leaves
- And... Large quantities of coarse materials

How to keep your Worm Farm healthy? (could add a small photo)

Moisture and Light - Worms usually live underground so they thrive in an environment that is **cool, dark** and **moist**. To keep the worm farm dark, put newspaper, hessian bags or another bin on top of the 'food' bin. Worms like moisture and should not be allowed to dry out. A light spray of fresh water when the worm farm is first constructed will generally provide sufficient moisture for the farm. Once the farm is settled in you should not need to add extra water. If you add too much extra water or allow rainwater to get into the bins, the worms may drown if submerged for too long in the bottom or middle layers.

Acidity - As food breaks down it creates a slightly acidic environment. Over time the worm farm may need some garden lime. water or more leafy greens to counteract overacidity.

How to use Worm Casting?

Castings - They can go straight onto the garden or pot plants or be made into a liquid fertiliser by adding water until the mixture looks like weak tea.

Worm Juice - It can be used as a liquid fertiliser but should be diluted at least 10:1.

Worms - Excess worms can be put in the compost heap where they will help speed up the composting process. Compost worms are unlikely to survive long in a dry Australian garden.

Where to find more information? (could mention watershed workshop)

Easy Guide to Worm Farming - www.livingthing.net.au/RC_Guide.htm

Basic information on Worm Farming - www.epa.nsw.gov.au/envirom/wormfarm.htm

Making your own Worm Farm - www.abc.net.au/creaturefeatures/make/wormfarm.htm

Spare Parts (Trays & Taps) for Your ReIn Worm Farm www.reln.com.au or 1300 137 356

1. ABS Feature Article 4613.0 – Solid Waste in Australia 2006

