

Vermicompost, Castings, and Worm Tea

COMPOST AND CASTINGS

As the worms eat your garbage, you will see vermicompost created in your bin. This nutrient-rich matter can be harvested at different times and in slightly different forms. If you harvest your vermicompost a bit earlier, you may notice that there are still small pieces of food or paper present. If you allow the worms to work through the compost for a longer period of time prior to removal, the compost will be finer and in smaller particles known as *castings*. Castings are more intense and eventually become dangerous to your worms because of its high salt content. Always be sure to harvest the castings from your bin and give the worms a new environment to eat and thrive.

When starting seedlings or planting your garden, we recommend:

- ❖ **1/4 worm castings:** For nutrients, organic matter, and structure.
- ❖ **1/4 sand or topsoil:** Adds additional structure and texture to the soil.
- ❖ **1/4 perlite or vermiculite:** Adds air pockets and improves drainage.
- ❖ **1/4 coconut coir:** Improves moisture retention of the mix.

STORING COMPOST

If you are harvesting compost during the off-season and need to store it, make sure to keep it in a plastic container or bag to maintain moisture. The nutrient-rich substance is most beneficial when moist, and can be stored for six to nine months. Outdoor storage is fine.

WORM TEA and NOT WORM TEA

The liquid runoff from the worm bin is not worm tea. It is simply the runoff from the moisture present in the foods you are adding to the bin. Use this liquid as a fertilizer for plants or lawns by mixing it 1:1 with water. Liquid will vary depending on bin climate.

To make actual worm tea, just dissolve worm castings in water:

1. Fill a 1 gallon bucket with tap water; let sit overnight to dechlorinate.
2. Dissolve approximately one cup of worm castings in water. Stir contents thoroughly and let sit.
3. Allow compost to steep for 12-36 hours.
4. Apply compost tea with a watering can, or spray directly onto the leaves with a spray bottle. For best results use your tea immediately after steeping.

୩୩୩ Worm Menu ୨୨୨

BEDDING / PAPER SOURCES

rolls from toilet paper or paper towels	newspaper
paper towels (no cleaners or oils)	cardboard
Kleenex (clean)	egg cartons
paper packing materials	dried leaves
shredded office paper	coconut coir

MAIN COURSES

apples	lettuces, kale
avocadoes	mushrooms
banana peels	pears
bell peppers	spinach, chard
broccoli	squash
carrots	tomatoes
cucumbers	yams
eggplant	
grapes	
potatoes (use caution with peels and pesticides)	

FAVORITES!

bananas
mangoes
peaches
berries: strawberry, blueberry, raspberry, blackberry
melons: cantaloupe, honeydew, watermelon (even rinds!)

OCCASIONAL TREATS

coffee grounds and filters
crushed egg shells
rice, pasta (no oil or sauces)
tea leaves
tea bags, string, tag (remove staple if possible)
breads (add in moderation, yeasts can create heat)
pineapple (add in moderation, juice can be fatal in high doses)

DO NOT FEED WORMS

shiny or glossy papers	compostable plastics
spicy/pickled foods	pet waste
yard waste, grass clippings	wood, nut shells
citrus peels, too much pineapple	animal waste
onions, garlic, hot peppers	
oils, butter, vinegar meat or dairy products	