

Composting using a worm bin is a great way to recycle food wastes like coffee grounds, tea bags, vegetable peels, fruit rinds and grains. By letting worms eat your food wastes, you'll end up with one of the best soil amendments available – worm castings.

## Composting using a worm bin

There are several low-cost worm bins you can use to compost your food wastes. A worm bin can be made out of a dark-colored plastic bin or wooden box. Or, test your carpentry skills and build your own bin using the plans in this brochure.

If you use a recycled bin or box, make sure it didn't previously contain toxic materials. Also - remember that any worm bin must have drainage holes in the bottom. If you're using a plastic bin, drill air holes in the lid.



## Getting your worm bin going

The first thing you need to do after setting up your worm bin is to fill it with shredded and moistened newspaper, cardboard, peat moss or brown leaves. Then scatter your worms on top and cover them with some of the "bedding."

As you generate food wastes, bury them in the bedding and let the worms go to work. Before you know it, they will have turned it all into high-quality compost, suitable for use on houseplants, seedlings or garden beds.

Every six months or so compost should be moved to one side of the bin and new bedding added to the empty half. At this point, bury food wastes in the new bedding only. Within a couple months, most of the worms will have migrated over to the new bedding. The finished compost can then be harvested. New bedding can be added to the empty half and the whole process started all over again!

For more information on worm composting, see Mary Appelhof's book, *Worms Eat My Garbage* (available at most libraries or your local bookstore).

## KEEPING YOUR WORMS HAPPY

DO FEED THEM:	DON'T FEED THEM:
Vegetable scraps	Meat or fish
Fruit rinds & peels	Dairy products
Coffee grounds & filters	(cheese, etc.) Butter or cooking oils
Tea grounds & bags	Oily foods
Breads & other grains	Pet wastes

## Where to find worms?

A starter batch of red worms can be dug out of a friend's worm bin or from a manure or compost pile. You can also purchase red worms by contacting the WSU/Whatcom County Cooperative Extension Master Recyclers/Composters program at (360) 676-6736 or 398-1310, ext. 56736.

For more information about composting in Whatcom County, contact any one of the following organizations:



WSU/Whatcom County  
Cooperative Extension  
Master Recyclers/Composters Program  
(360) 676-6736 or 398-1310 ext. 56736  
[www.whatcom.wsu.edu/ag/homehort/compost/composting.htm](http://www.whatcom.wsu.edu/ag/homehort/compost/composting.htm)

Whatcom County  
Recycling Hotline  
(360) 676-5723 or 384-8040



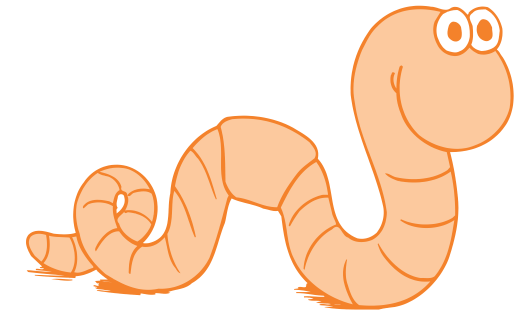
Whatcom County  
Solid Waste Division  
(360) 676-7695 or 380-8102  
E-mail: [plempere@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:plempere@co.whatcom.wa.us)



★ You may obtain this information in alternate formats including Braille, large print, and audio tape by contacting the Whatcom County Solid Waste Division at 676-7695 or 380-8102; please allow up to 14 days for transcription. Individuals with hearing impairments can reach the County through the Washington Relay Service, 1-800-833-6388.

*Parts of this brochure were originally developed by Seattle Tilth.*

# Building & using a Worm Compost Bin



**Build your own worm bin**

**Choose from two different styles**

**Using your worm bin**



Whatcom County  
Public Works  
Solid Waste Division

