

# sustainable illawarra

## fact sheet - waste



## Worm Farming: Your Questions Answered

### Commonly Asked Questions

People often are hesitant about worm farms as they have so many questions they want answered first. Here we are to open up that can of worms. All your questions on worm farming answered.

#### How can you help the worms eat faster?

- Shred or mash the food scraps;
- Don't add too much acidic food, such as citrus fruits and garlic. Add lime with these;
- Keep the worm system at around 24°C.

#### Apart from fruit and vegetable scraps, what else can I feed my worms?

- Worms also like soaked and ripped pizza boxes and egg cartons, cardboard and paper;
- You can feed worms composted manures. Fresh manure will heat up and may contain vermicides if the animal has recently been treated for worms;
- Garden materials are best composted.

#### What are the little white worm-like creatures?

- These are not compost worms, but another type of worm. They indicate acidic conditions. Add lime to lower the acidity.

#### There are ants in the worm system - what do I do?

- This is a sign that the worm system has become too dry and acidic;
- Moisten the system and add lime;
- If ants persist, isolate them by placing the supports of the worm system in containers of water.

#### There are lots of small flies. Are these a problem?

- These are vinegar flies. They are not a problem, but an indication that you are overfeeding your worm system. Reduce the feeding rate to help.

#### My worm system has maggots, what should I do?

- These are most likely Soldier Fly larvae (about a 2-3 cm long and heavily segmented) or Vinegar Fly larvae (6 mm long). Both of these are beneficial, as they help break down the food scraps.
- To remove larvae, apply lime, or leave some bread soaked in milk at the surface. Remove after 2-3 days.



[www.easwormfarming.com](http://www.easwormfarming.com)

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## There are worms in the collector tray. What should I do?

The worms need a path to return to the upper trays. An ice cream container covered with moist newspaper should work. Or even try a brick or large rock.

## My worm farm smells. What should I do?

- Worm farms should not smell. Worm castings held close to the nose smell like rich topsoil. If your worm farm does smell, however, this is a sign of anaerobic conditions. Stop feeding and stir the materials with a small fork. Add lime.
- Only resume feeding when smells have gone.

## Will I get too many worms?

The worm population will regulate itself to the available space and the amount of food given. Worm concentration should reach capacity of about 10,000—15,000 worms after 2 to 5 years.

## Will my worm farm dry out?

It is important to make sure that the Hessian bag or cardboard that covers the worms is kept moist. This keeps the worm farm conditions moist. If you are using a worm farm that collects the liquid fertiliser (like the ReIn Worm Factory), adding water to your worm farm will assist the production of this fertiliser



## Where can I buy a worm farm?

- Worm farms can be bought from Wollongong City Council, Shellharbour City Council and Kiama Municipal Council administration buildings.
- Worm farms are also available from hardware stores, nurseries and garden centres.

## Where can I buy start - up worms from?

- Max Norden at Wormifert on 0414 733 823 for free home delivery.
- Worms are also available from hardware stores, K-Mart (not all stores), Nurseries & Garden Centres.

### References

- Earth Works Participants Notes, NSW Environment Protection Authority, August, 1996.
- The Worm Factory, Questions and Answers, ReIn Plastics, Pty Ltd.

## Further Information

Kiama Municipal Council (business hours) 4232 0444

Shellharbour City Council (business hours) 4221 6111

Wollongong City Council (business hours) 4227 7111



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