



Worm Farm Composting

Did you know?

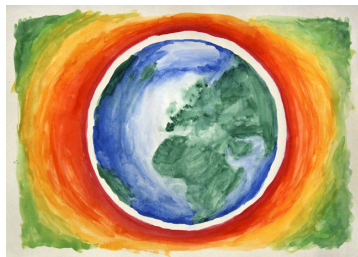
Materials like food scraps from our lunches can emit the greenhouse gas methane if they are put in plastic bags and thrown away. Our trash is collected and sent to landfills where it gets hot. Bacteria eats at the food scraps, but it has no way to organically decompose, so the gasses it gives off build up and are trapped, until they get released into our atmosphere. Greenhouse gases like methane have been linked to rising global temperatures.

Fight Greenhouse Gases with Composting



If organic materials like food scraps and yard waste are properly disposed of in composting systems, food scraps and yard waste can break down without emitting methane, becoming healthy soil to grow new things food and other plants!

To properly decompose, compost must have the right mixture of what we call "greens" (fruit and veggie scraps, grass clippings, coffee grounds, weeds, etc), "browns" (dried leaves, paper, cardboard- dry scraps with lots of carbon), and the natural elements of soil, water and air. If these components are also introduced to a decomposer, like worms, the process of decomposition speeds up!



If we compost...

We will reduce the amount of garbage we create...
 Improve soil and enable it to hold water better...
 Reduce the need for chemical fertilizers, which eliminates some new pollutants.

Worms: Our decomposition hero

Worms are a perfect example of the powerful relationship between decomposers and organic materials that are no longer living.

What is a decomposer?

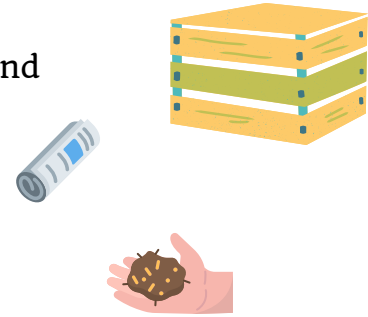
A decomposer is a living organism that helps to break down organic material. Worms, like other invertebrates, are great decomposers. Worms also help to aerate soil, which gives plants more room.



Creating a Worm Farm

Materials:

1. Bin: wood or plastic (at least 1.5 cubic feet in area and 16 inches deep with good ventilation)
2. Newspaper
3. 1 pound of red worms (about 500-1000 worms)
4. 2 or 3 handfuls of dirt
5. Food scraps (to feed the worms)
6. Burlap or old clean, dry cloth



Instructions:

1. Buy, build or find a bin/box for your worms. Drill holes in sides if there are no holes (good ventilation is vital for proper decomposition and worm health)
2. Make worm bedding:
 - a. Tear newspaper into ½" to 1" wide strips.
 - b. Dunk newspaper strips in water and add to bin.
 - c. Add a handful of soil and fluff.
 - d. Loosely mix all together, like a salad
3. Add worms and food:
 - a. Purchase or obtain about 1 pound of red worms (about 500 to 1,000 worms)
 - b. Place your worms in the moist newspaper bedding. Be very gentle!
 - c. Put a handful of food scrap waste near the worms and cover well with more moist newspaper bedding.
 - d. Add a layer of dry shredded news paper to fill the bin, and then a layer of burlap or cloth.
4. Wait 1-2 weeks before adding more food scraps. The worms need time to get used to their new home, and the food can begin to decompose.
5. After the waiting period, feed worms every 3-7 days, always burying the food scraps under dry paper.
6. Do not overfeed! Bad smells or large amounts of uneaten food indicate overfeeding.
7. Harvest worm castings after 3 to 6 month- put at the base of your plants!