



# WASTE FACTSHEET

## WORM FARMING

A great way to recycle food scraps at home is through a worm farm. This system is easy to set-up and maintain and will result in nutrient-rich fertiliser for the garden.

### WHY RECOVER ORGANICS?

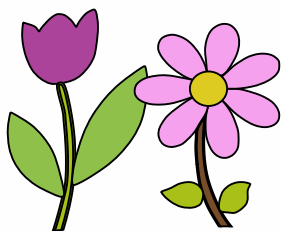
When organic material is compacted and buried in landfill, it breaks down anaerobically (without oxygen) and in doing so, produces large quantities of methane, a greenhouse gas 24 times more potent than carbon dioxide.

By diverting food and garden waste from landfill and turning it into compost, excessive methane production is avoided and what was once 'waste' becomes a valuable resource – free, organic fertiliser.

### WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF FERTILISER?

Fertiliser produced by worms can:

- Improve soil structure and water retention
- Encourage microorganisms into your garden
- Produce healthier and more resilient plants
- It's free and completely organic!



### WHAT DOES WORM FARMING PRODUCE?

Worm farms produce worm "leachate" (liquid run-off), which will drain to the bottom and can then be captured from the tap or hole in the worm farm. Worm leachate is very strong, and must be diluted before it is used on the garden (approximately 1 part leachate to 10 parts water, or until the colour of light tea).

Worm faeces, known as castings, can also be used as fertiliser and spread straight onto the garden. By feeding one side (or the level above, for multi-level stackable worm farms) of your worm farm, the worms will move to the area with food, allowing you to collect the castings left behind.



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## BUILDING A WORM FARM

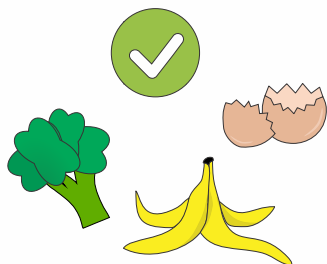
A worm farm can be made from just about anything – an old fridge on its side, bathtub, polystyrene box or a specialised container from a hardware store. See what's lying around the house or visit the Burragan Recycle Shop to source some materials to upcycle. Composting worms are best purchased from local breeders in terms of value for money, but can also be purchased from some hardware stores.

1. Line the container with a layer of chicken wire or large pebbles for drainage, ensuring that there is a tap or hole for liquids to be collected.
2. Spread soaked coconut fibre or shredded newspaper in the container.
3. Add composting worms (not worms from your garden).
4. Cover with damp newspaper, an old cotton tea towel or hessian to maintain a constant temperature.
5. Store the worm farm somewhere sheltered and cool, where temperature remains constant. Beware of the winter frost or searing summer heat!
6. Leave for a week or so to settle in before feeding them.

## WHAT DO I FEED MY WORMS?

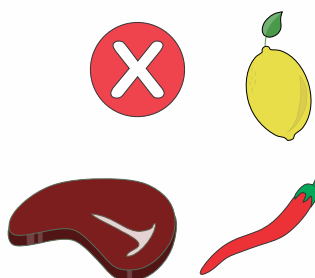
### Worms love to eat:

- Most fruit scraps
- Most vegetable scraps
- Eggshells
- Dried grass clippings
- Small amounts of leaves
- Vacuum cleaner dust
- Hair
- Coffee grounds
- Tea bags (no synthetic tea bags)
- Torn up newspaper/paper/cardboard



### Worms do not like:

- Citrus fruits
- Onion and garlic
- Chilli
- Dairy
- Meat and seafood
- Animal droppings
- Eucalyptus leaves



## WORM FARM TIPS

- Your worm farm, like compost, should be as moist as a wrung-out sponge
- Ensure the lid is on properly and the blanket remains damp
- Worms slow down and eat less in winter
- Don't feed worms every day – allow time for worms to consume scraps
- Cut food into small pieces (the mushier, the better!)
- Place food scraps under the worm blanket on top of the soil layer, then flip the soil layer over – food can be immediately accessed by worms

