

Vermi-Composting Tip Sheet

? Did You Know?

57% of the garbage going to landfill from Calgary homes could be composted¹? 22% is yard waste the other 35% is food waste. These materials contribute to methane gas and leachate pollution in the landfill. Compost these items at home and create a nutrient rich soil amendment (compost) to use in your yard or for houseplants instead!

i What you will need:

- > A worm bin (build your own or purchase one from us!)
- > Red Wiggler Worms (we recommend ½ lb/bin – we sell worms, too!)
- > Newspaper & Food scraps

Directions:

- 1 Start your worm bin with a layer of shredded newspaper.
- 2 Collect your food scraps in a separate container. If possible, cut the scraps into small pieces and store them in the freezer. This will help control fruit flies.
- 3 Add the worms to one corner of the bin and a small amount of thawed food scraps directly on top.
- 4 Layer shredded newspaper (2-3”) on top of the worms and spritz with water. The newspaper will help control moisture in the bin – if it’s too dry, spritz with more water – if it’s too wet, add more dry newspaper.
- 5 Feed the worms about once a week. The smaller and thawed pieces of food waste will be easier for the worms to eat and digest, meaning more compost quicker. Add the materials to different corners each week.



Want to start vermicomposting at your school or community group? Our Green Kids program offers a “Worms Love Leftovers” presentation and you can purchase all the materials you need from us to get you started!



1. What's in Calgary's garbage? (2014). Retrieved October 24, 2014 from <http://www.calgary.ca/UEP/WRS/Pages/City-initiatives/Calgarys-Garbage.aspx>

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? What can be added?

> Acceptable Materials

- Fruit and vegetable scraps – skins, peels and unwanted parts
- Plant waste – ensure it is untreated
- Coffee grounds and filter – avoid bleached filters
- Tea leaves and tea bags – staples removed
- Rice and pasta with no butter, oils or sauces

We offer a free vermicomposting guide online as well as resources you can purchase in-store. Check out our website for more information.



> Cautioned Materials

- Seeds or pits – cherry pit or bigger can't go in
- Citrus – each bin is different, test it out and see if your bin likes it. Freezing citrus first will help
- Avocado peel – worm Spa! They won't eat it but they will love to hang out on it
- Ginger – may or may not like it
- Onion – will be the first to smell, so if you are worried about smell, avoid onions for the first little while
- Egg shells – worms won't process them. You can put them in but adding later to finished product is better
- Meat and bones – will smell – try it if you want to but it is not recommended



> Unacceptable Materials

- Meat, bones, fish scraps: these materials attract dogs, cats, insects & rodents and take a long time to break down
- Oil, fatty material, dairy products: oils and greases take a long time to break down and they affect the breakdown of other materials too; they also attract insects
- Pet litter: may contain disease organisms harmful to humans
- Diseased plants: the heat of a home compost pile may not kill the diseased organisms or any insects or eggs infecting a plant
- Dishwater: most dishwashing soaps contain perfumes and greases
- Barbecue ashes/coals: highly resistant to decomposition and contain excessive amounts of sulphur

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