

City of Fort Collins

2005

*Environmental
Program Series*

*18th Annual Series
of Free Public Programs*



Sponsored by:

Fort Collins Utilities
Horticulture Division
Natural Resources Department
SmartTrips

Sponsored by:

Fort Collins Utilities
Horticulture Division
Natural Resources Department
SmartTrips

VERMICOMPOSTING

View Video

THE COMPLETE HOME COMPOSTING
VIDEO GUIDE
PART II

WHAT IS VERMICOMPOSTING?

- Composting with worms
- Contains worm castings
 - Can provide 5-11 times more nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium than your surrounding soil
 - Increases beneficial micro-organisms and plant growth hormones compared to regular compost

Seven Steps to Vermicomposting

1. Choose a Bin
2. Fill the Bin
3. Seed the Worms
4. Place the Worm bed
5. Feed the worms
6. Harvest the castings
7. Use your vermicompost

Step 1: Choosing a Bin



Example of an Outdoor Vermicomposting Bin





Retro-fit Bins



More Retro-fits





Earth Machine



Seattle Composter



Soil Saver

And then my favorite...



Step 2: Fill The Bin

Ingredients:

- Shredded Newspaper
- Straw
- Cut-up cardboard
- Sawdust
- Small wood chips
- Dead leaves

✓ Pre-Soak your ingredients

✓ Should be damp as a moist sponge

✓ Fluff and put in bed or box

75% moisture

Step 3: Seed the worms!

- Drop 'em in there
 - If indoors: leave lid off, light on
 - Worms do NOT like light
 - They will burrow down where they like it!
- *Leave worms alone for several days

Step 4: Place the worm bed

- Convenience and "Location, Location, Location!"
- **INDOOR:** Close to the kitchen, mud room, basement, closet, etc.
- **OUTDOOR:** partial to full shade in summer (i.e. North side of house), and full sun in winter (i.e. South side of house)
- ✓ Thermometers can be very helpful when making this decision

Step 5: Feed the worms

Food Waste =

- ✓ Fruit and Vegetable
- ✓ Tea bags and Coffee Grounds
- ✓ Crushed Egg Shells
- ✓ Houseplant Clippings
- ✓ Pasta and Rice
- ✓ Bread and Cereal

Food Waste ≠

-  NO Meats
-  NO Bones
-  NO Oils
-  NO Fats
-  NO Vinegar
-  NO Dog or Cat Waste

Step 5: Feed the worms

TWO FEEDING METHODS:

1. Burying or pocket feeding method
2. Surface feeding method

Step 5: Burying or pocket feeding method

After several days:

- Bury small amounts of food waste in bed
- Mark with popsicle stick (or other marker)
- Wait a day or two and check to see if worms are eating (clue: food is disappearing)
 - *Trick: The smaller the food the faster it disappears*

✓ The popsicle stick marks where you last fed – move the stick(s) each time you feed.

Step 5: Surface feeding method

- Spread the food thinly across the entire surface
- Cover the food with a thin layer of shredded paper
 - Then cover this with *perforated jute-backed* carpet
- Close the bed
- At next feeding observe the feeding rate

Step 6: Harvest the Castings

There are four (4) Methods

1. Dump and Sort
2. Worms sort themselves
3. Window screen sort
4. Divide and Dump

Step 7: Using Vermicompost

- ✓ Top dressing for your house plants, gardens and lawns
- ✓ Seeds and transplants
- ✓ Making Compost Tea

Web Sites

- <http://www.epa.osw>
- <http://www.ext.colostate.edu/search.html>
- <http://www.mastercomposter.com>
- <http://compost.css.cornell.edu>
- <http://soilfoodweb.com>
- <http://www.sedhec.gov/recycle/html/pubs.html>

Publications

- The Rodale Book of Composting
- Let it Rot: The gardeners guide to composting
- Composting to reduce the waste stream: A guide to small scale food and yard waste composting
- The Humanure HandBook

The Most Important Things to Remember !!!!!

- You have to do it to learn it.
- Mistakes are the best lessons.
- Have Fun.

Wormbulance



“Visualizing Global Worming”