The Worm Bin

According to Walla Walla Worm Works Barb

**Supplies:**
- Two plastic bins
- May be smaller or larger, depending on your needs. This size should be able to process 1/2 lb food per day
- Electric Drill w/ 1/4 in drill bit
- Two bricks or rocks
- Paper (newspaper preferable, but other kinds work as well)
- Leaves
- Food scraps
- Water
- CANADIAN peat moss or Aged horse manure (NO PINE BEDDING!)
- Worms

**Assembly:**
1. Using your electric drill, drill 12 evenly spaced holes in the lid and bottom of a bin. Drill a line of holes 2 in apart, approximately 3/4 of the way up the same bin. The holes in the bottom of the bin are to allow moisture to drip out. Those in the sides and top are for airflow.

2. Rip newspaper into thin strips. In bin, mix paper, leaves, and two hand fuls of peat moss/manure. Do not compact the paper; keep it fluffy. Add water until paper lets out a few drops of water when squeezed. Continue adding paper until bin is over 3/4 full. This will require a lot more paper than you expect. Mix in about 1 lb of food scraps, making sure to cover them. Keeping the food covered will help prevent fruit flies and smell.

3. Your worm bin should be kept in a well-ventilated area that will not freeze in winter. Worm bins should not smell bad or attract bugs; they can easily be kept indoors. Place bricks inside the second bin. Put the perforated bin on top of the bricks. This creates space for compost tea to collect. Compost tea is the excess liquid that will trickle out of your worm bin. This liquid is highly nutritious for plants; regularly empty the bins of tea and feed your houseplants or garden.

4. Let the bin sit for two weeks. The food needs to begin decomposition before worms are added so that the worms will be immediately able to feed. When you are ready for worm, call Barb Newby at 509-540-4055. Barb is a local worm breeder who will sell you 500 red wigglers for $10. Add food by digging a shallow hole and burying it. Add more paper and water as is needed to keep bin full and wet. Every week or so, turn the top 6 inches of the bin. This is a good time to add in paper, because you want it integrated into the compost (don't just lay it on top). If the bin begins to smell, you need to turn it more deeply and make sure the paper isn't compacting.
5. Worm castings should accumulate and fall to the bottom of the bin. When you are ready to harvest castings, separate the top 6 inches into another container, leaving mainly castings behind. The majority of the worms should be in this area of the bin. Then, dump the remaining material onto a tarp in a well lit area. The worms will burrow down into the bottom of the pile. Separate out the castings from the remaining worms and uncomposted materials. Reassemble your bin with fresh bedding and replace the worms.

- **Worm DONTs**
  - DO NOT feed them MEAT, DAIRY, or OILY foods
  - DO NOT put pine into the worm bins. PINE KILLS WORMS. Only Canadian peat moss is pine free, and be sure you do not use horse manure from stables with pine bedding
  - DO NOT feed them CITRUS! Anything too acidic will make them ill. This also means pineapple
- **DO NOT** feed them CAT or DOG WASTE

- **Worms DO EAT:**
  - Fruit and vegetable matter
  - Grains
  - Eggshells
  - Coffee Grounds
  - Tea Bags (don’t forget to remove the staple!)
  - Aged cow, rabbit, or horse manure. Let it sit outside in the rain for at least a month. Fresh manure will contain salts and acids that make worms ill, and will reach uncomfortably high temperatures as it decomposes. Other manures are too acidic.

**Questions?** Email Barb at wwwormworks@gmail.com