

# Waste to wonderful

## Worm Farms

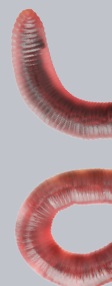
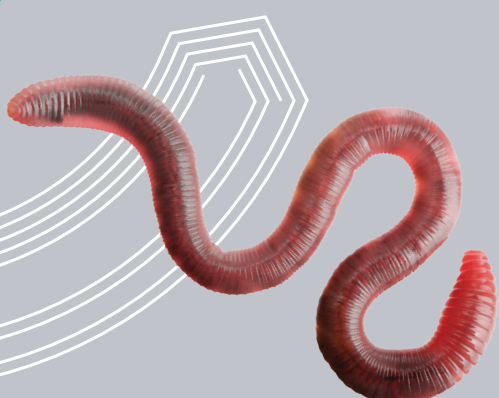
Kitchen scraps and garden waste make up a third of household waste. In landfill organic waste releases methane, a major greenhouse gas. Setting up a worm farm at home is a good way, both to keep your food scraps out of landfill, and also feed your garden. Worm farms are great when most of your organic waste is food scraps.

Worm farming isn't highly technical but worms do need a little care and knowledge to keep them happy and alive. The worms best suited to worm farms are tiger worms (*Eisenia fetida*) as they are adapted to eating decomposing organic materials.

Worm farms produce vermicast which is black gold for your garden – add it to compost or potting mix and use when planting seedlings or to fertilise existing plants.

There are lots of different types of worm farms to choose from – check out both Councils' websites ([search word: compost](#)) for which retailers offer a Council subsidy. Worms can also be purchased locally with the subsidy.

Give your worms time to settle in and grow their numbers over the first few months. Don't overfeed them. Put in food scraps every few days but don't add more until the previous batch has been eaten.



**Nā tō rourou, nā tōku rourou, ka ora ai te iwi.**

*With your food basket, and my food basket, the people will thrive.*



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# TOP TIPS



For worm farming:

## Top tip 1

Worms love most fruit and vegetable scraps, as well as coffee grounds, tea, shredded paper and cardboard, crushed eggshells and vacuum cleaner dust. They do love carbon so use lots of shredded cardboard, paper and wood chips from deciduous trees.

## Top tip 2

Worms don't like citrus, onions, spicy food, too much cooked food, mouldy bread, garden waste or shiny paper.

## Top tip 3

If uneaten food is building up, reduce feeding until the worms catch up and remember to chop your food scraps up (worms have very small mouths).

## Top tip 4

Monitor for moisture levels – your farm should be moist but not wet. If worms are climbing up the side it may be too wet, so add more paper or dry leaves and check there isn't liquid to be removed from the bottom.

## Top tip 5

Keep your worm farm's pH balanced by adding a sprinkle of lime once a month. If you find small black vinegar flies around the worm farm, gently fork over the top layer, sprinkle on lime and cover with a damp tea towel. If you find you have heaps of little white worms, add some white bread overnight, then remove the bread with the white worms the next day and sprinkle the worm farm with lime.

## Top tip 6

Don't let your worms overheat or freeze – move your worm farm into the shade in summer and into the sun in winter, near a north-facing wall. Put an old blanket or carpet over the farm during frosts. A range of 10°C to 30°C is OK.

## Top tip 7

Add your vermicast to compost or to fertilise existing plants. You can also make "worm tea" with a kilogram of vermicast to 10kg of water. If your water is chlorinated let it sit for a day before adding the vermicast.

## Top tip 8

Any liquid caught in the bottom tray comes from your scraps – you can tip it back into the farm to keep moisture levels up (if you're getting a lot of liquid increase the amount of cardboard, paper or wood chips).

