

## Tips for Container-style Worm Farms



A worm farm that has a bottom floor is a container-style worm farm. Containers are portable and can be run indoors or outside – perfect for apartment dwellers or renters. Containers also can catch the liquids given off from food as it changes from waste to wonderful fertiliser.

Container-style worm farms can be in a single layer, or in a tower of trays that stack on top of each other, with holes in the bottom floor to drain liquids and allow the worms free movement between layers.

Some container-style worm farms drain liquids into a catchment box, perhaps with a tap for easy removal, or they can sit directly on the ground. The most common material used for container-style worm farms is plastic.

Container –style worm farms can be a bit tricky to manage, mostly because the worm bed is not touching soil. The ecosystem inside may take more time to develop, and you must move trays around to make room for more food scraps. You have to empty a tray (the lowest one), and move trays around, to make room for more waste in the top feeding tray.

### Here are some tips and tricks to using a container-style worm farm:

1. Fluff the bed regularly (they can handle the stir-up) to add air pockets.
2. Rotate feeding sites. Try burying food waste into a corner. Stop feeding the tray when you plan to harvest the castings (4-6 weeks later).
2. Add Garden Lime regularly, tsp per feed. Use calcium carbonate (garden lime) NOT dolomite or builder's lime.
3. Pre-rot food (cut it up, lime it, blanch it, soak it) before feeding the worms.
4. No meat, or large quantities of citrus peels. All fruit is okay, but do lime regularly. Coffee grounds are fantastic additions (just not too much in one go)!
5. Feed little and often - don't wait for the old stuff to disappear. Increase amt as worm colony grows in numbers (and the bacteria becomes more dominant).
7. More than one tray makes it easier – giving you more room to add food scraps, and allowing older trays time to properly decompose (which makes harvesting Vermicast much easier because the worms have moved on).
6. Remember, worms get all the credit, but it's the bacteria doing all the work...and worms eat the bacteria (isn't nature great!) Container style worm farms don't get bacteria unless it's added– Do this by adding a handful of healthy soil/compost/or vermicast. Cold temps slow down the bacteria development, which explains why the recycling system slows down in winter.
7. If catching the liquid is not important to you during the winter months, place the box with worms directly on ground - This controls temp, enables exchange of earth-bacteria, and allows natural drainage.
8. In the winter, place your worm farm where it can get some morning sun, and where it's out of the wind. Move indoors if you want to speed things up.
9. Drainage is important – If the bedding seems overly wet, it may smell which indicates anaerobic pockets. Add garden lime and dry strips of newspaper or corrugated cardboard into this area (which adds pockets of air).
10. Place a piece of carpet or cardboard on the top to block out light, and give the worms some added surface area and block light.