Outdoor Worm Composting

*Advantages*

* Natural environment for worms
* No bin
* Composts large amounts of kitchen and yard waste
* No need to separate worms from poo

*Location*

* Close to kitchen
* Near water source
* Out of sight
* Slightly sheltered and partially shaded

*Type of Worms*

* Red worms or red wigglers are surface feeders and stay in top 18” pile (not earth worms)
* Will produce 3 cocoons per week with 3-10 eggs per cocoon
* Need food, oxygen, moisture, dark place to live
* Will eat 1 ½ times their weight in food each day

*Where to get worms*

* Free from a gardening friend
* Purchase online
* Attract them into the garden

*Build pile*

* Bedding—dry organic carbon materials like: shredded paper, shredded leaves, chopped straw—small amounts of pine needles (to acidic) and saw dust (packs too tightly and too woody)
* A little soil for digestion and to inoculate pile with other decomposers and microbes
* Food—kitchen scraps, green or brown shredded leaves, barnyard manure
* Paper napkins, tissues, coffee filters, shredded newspaper, shredded mail will all take a very long time to decompose
* Grass clippings and other yard waste should be added in small amounts or let sit in a pile until it has cooled down

NO yard waste that has recently been treated with pesticide (bug killer)

NO glossy magazine paper

NO meat or dairy

NO woody sticks, twigs, or branches

NO staples (from shredded mail)

NO thorns

NO weeds that have gone to seed or invasive weeds (mint, thistles, purslane, morning glory)

NO diseased plants

NO cat, dog, or pig manure—never, never, never!

A worm compost pile is small, doesn’t smell, and is not unattractive.



