

Temperature: Red worms tolerate a wide range of temperatures; however, the ideal bedding (not air) temperature is between 55-77 degrees F. Bedding with a sustained temperature above 84 degrees F is harmful, sometimes fatal to red worms. The temperature of the bedding inside the bin should be measured because the temperature in the moist bedding often differs from the temperature of the outside air. If your bin is kept outdoors, make sure it is shaded from hot sun.

Bedding: 1. Shredded corrugated cardboard is our #1 choice for bedding because it holds moisture, resists compaction, and worms love to eat it. 2. Old decaying leaves are also a great material for bedding, but mix them with cardboard. Use only dry brown leaves, as green leaves can make your bin heat up as they compost. 3. Long strips of shredded newsprint or paper can also be used. They are easily moistened, but the strips compact and require frequent re-moistening. The ink used for printing newspapers is not toxic to red worms as it is soy-based. 4. Some farmers use animal manure as bedding. Don't use manure if your bin will be located in or near your living area as animal manures contain many kinds of insects. If your bin will be outside or in a garage, manure is great. Worms really like manure. Remember - no pet, people, or pig manure! Only use manure from plant-eating animals. 5. Peat moss can be used if rinsed and mixed with other bedding materials. It holds moisture well; however, it provides no nutrients for the worms, and can be expensive. It is also not a renewable resource. 6. Coconut coir is becoming more and more popular as an effective and economical bedding. It is pH neutral, has excellent water retention, and does not promote a hospitable environment for mold. NOTE: A handful of rich black garden soil or old bedding from another worm bin provides the grit and beneficial microbes worms need for breaking down food particles within their gizzards. You can substitute ground egg shell, pulverized dolomite limestone, ground oyster shell, or even sand. Our worm chow contains both grit and a pH buffer. **DO NOT** use potting soil or dirt as your main bedding. Your composting worms cannot live well in dirt. TIP: Put a piece of moist cardboard or burlap or a sheet of plastic or bubble wrap on top of your bedding to keep it moist.

Will and Alyssa's Top Tips For New Worm Farmers

1. **Don't overfeed your worms!** Start with just a little food at a time. It's hard for your worms to starve as they can even eat their bedding. Overfeeding is the #1 cause of worm death. In an emergency, worms can survive without added food for weeks or more if moisture and temperature stay within their comfort range.
2. **Don't overwater your worms!** They need moist bedding like a wrung-out sponge, but your bin can become anaerobic (without oxygen) and smell bad if it is too wet.
3. **Resist the urge to constantly check your worms!** They will happily multiply and thrive if left alone for 3-7 days at a time. Mating worms look like a tied-up knot.