

Red Wigglers - Basic Worm Care

How fast do my worms breed? The breeding cycle is approximately 27 days from mating to the hatching of cocoons filled with worm eggs. Red Wiggler cocoons typically hold about 3 eggs each. Red Wigglers can double in population every 60-90 days.

How long do my worms live? It's common for Red Wigglers to live 2-3 years, though 4-5 years is not unheard of. You will rarely see dead worms as they are made up mostly of water and disintegrate quickly.

How much do my worms eat? Red Wigglers are voracious and eat more than their body weight each week. 1,000 adult worms (~1 lb.) eat roughly 1-2 lbs. of organic waste per week.

What can kill my worms? Worms are sensitive to major fluctuations in pH, lack of oxygen, lack of moisture, and certain toxic chemicals such as acid or ammonia. Worms are resistant to many chemicals that are toxic to humans. The vermiculture process will even break down some toxic chemicals into benign components.

Worms and Disease: Worms are subject to very few diseases. The bacteria fostered in their gut and excreted with their castings are benevolent and produced in such overwhelming numbers that disease-producing bacteria find life very difficult in an earthworm environment. Accordingly, worm beds and their castings are essentially free of harmful pathogens and viruses. This makes worms ideal for the stabilization of all forms of putrescible wastes.

Food: Most any vegetables (they love corn cobs!), melon rinds, avocado, banana peels, lettuce and cabbage, celery ends, old bread, pasta, or grains, coffee grounds, tea bags, egg shells, or citrus peels, are all suitable worm food. DO NOT feed meat, dairy, papaya, or pineapple (which is highly acidic). Citrus or onions should be fed in moderation. Non-biodegradable materials do not belong in a worm bin. Cat litter or dog feces should not be used, either. If you want a clean and easy all-in-one food that will help your worms grow and multiply and control acidity in your bin, use our special worm chow.

Environment: Red worms must live in a moist environment because they breathe through their skin. 50-70% moisture is optimal. If you squeeze the worm bedding in your hand and water streams out, it is too wet. It should feel like a wrung-out sponge and shed no more than a few drops of water when squeezed, but it must be moist.

Aeration: Red worms need oxygen to live. They produce carbon dioxide. Good air circulation is a must in your worm bin. If you use a lid, make sure that it has plenty of holes or a screened vent. If your bin smells stinky, fluff (mix) the bedding bottom to top.