Worms Are Our Buddies

As composters, they’ll gladly recycle much of our food waste. Vermicomposting recruits red wiggler worms to convert our non-meat food scraps into a valuable resource — compost — that can be used to improve the health of our yards, gardens and houseplants!

Los Gusanos Son Nuestros Compañeros

Haciendo abono orgánico de una dieta compuesta con desechos de comida.
### Getting Started (Comenzado)

To start vermicomposting, you'll need the following:
- Worms
- A home for your worms (a worm bin or worm box)
- A good place to locate your worm home
- Bedding materials
- Food for your worms

### Why Vermicompost?

- **It's fun!**
- **It's easy!**
- It keeps food waste from going into the trash or down the disposal. This saves water and energy and helps Denver avoid the environmental and economic costs of collecting, transporting, and landfiling these wastes.
- It creates a high-quality soil amendment that can enrich your soil and save you money on fertilizer!
- It allows apartment dwellers, office workers and school-children to recycle food scraps on site year-round! This means you no longer need a backyard or good weather to be a compostor!

### Troubleshooting (Los Gusanos Mueren)

- **Worms are dying.**
  - Food is on the surfaces of the bin.
  - Temperatures too hot or cold.
  - Food is too rich or too thin.
  - Food is too fresh or too rotten.
  - Too much bedding or too little.
  - The bin attracts flies.
  - The bin attracts beetles or flies.
  - Too much moisture or too little.
  - Too little moisture or too much.

### Using Your Worm Compost

Congratulations! You’ve done everything right, your worms are fat and happy and they’ve given you a heaping helping of compost. What do you do with it?

To make good use of your compost, just spread a 1/4” to 1” layer at the base of garden plants, cultivating lightly, or mix some into a potting mix for indoor plants or vegetable transplants. No more than 20% of the mix should be worm compost.

Worm compost consists primarily of worm castings that supply nutrients and humus to your soil. This helps all of your plants thrive.

### Rounding Up Your Worms

The worms you want for vermicomposting are known as redworms, red wigglers and brandling worms. They can be found in old compost piles, leaf piles or manure piles, or purchased in the spring from worm suppliers or local fishing supply stores. Start with about one pound of worms, which amounts to two big handfuls. Ordinary earthworms are not suitable for indoor composting because they require the deep soil and cooler temperatures found outside.

### For More Information Contact:

- Denver Recycles at 3-1-1 or www.denvergov.org/DenverRecycles
- Denver Urban Gardens at 303-292-9900 or www.dug.org

Also, visit the Denver Backyard Demonstration Site in the Grove Community Garden at 13th Ave. and Colorado Blvd. in Denver. The site is open during daylight hours from late April through mid-October.