

# Viticulture—Worm Farming

## Setting up your worm Farm

Liquid collection tray on the bottom. This collects the liquid fertiliser. Make sure the liquid is drained off daily and its cleaned out every 6 months.

Working Trays. This is where the worms live and eat. Place food directly into the top tray. Use one tray at a time, or use all for a more efficient wormfarm. If using multiple trays ensure they are rotated regularly. Always place the feeding tray on top.

The lid. This is essential to keep pests out, rain out and light out. Make sure it is only removed briefly to feed worms.

## Operating your worm farm

Your worm farm needs to be kept at a constant temperature of 18-25 degrees. So, in the winter, a little bit of sun is good, in the summer a lot of shade is best.

When the castings in a feeding tray reach the flanges, add an empty tray on top and feed into the new tray. When all the worms have moved up, use the castings from the bottom tray.

## Using the Castings

As a seed raising mix. Use 2/3 castings to 1/3 sandy loam material.

Mix castings into your compost to give it an extra nutrient boost. Mix castings with water and pour around the root line of fruit trees.

## Worms Like:

- Lettuce Leaves
- Rice (boiled)
- Silverbeet / Spinach
- Apples / pears
- Avocados (seeds + skins)
- Egg shells
- Tea bags
- Melon skins
- Capsicum (small amounts)
- Tomatoes (including seeds)
- Carrots
- Broccoli (including stalks)
- Pasta (cooked)
- Citrus fruits
- Corn (cob + husks)
- Banana skins
- Coffee grinds
- Cucumber
- Bread crusts (not slices)
- Cooked potato

## Do:

Add a handful of wood ash or dolomite to your worm farm if you are feeding it a lot of citrus. It keeps it nice and pH neutral (and keeps away the vinegar fly).

Drain off the liquid fertiliser on a daily basis. If using the worm liquid on your plants remember to dilute it to the colour of weak tea.

Keep a hessian or cotton cover over the top tray. This will keep the pests out, protect the worms from too much light exposure and keep them from drying out.



## Worms don't like:

- Garlic
- Chilli
- Carrot tops
- Seeds
- Fatty food wastes
- Onions
- Potato skins
- Raw potato
- Sprouts
- Meat
- Dairy products
- Sugary foods

## Don't:

Overfeed your worms—if your worms haven't gotten through the food that you feed them last week, you are feeding them too much. Consider using multiple trays, or invest in a another worm farm.

Expose your worms to too much light. The more you disturb them, the less they work for you.

Only feed your worms once per day.

## Trouble Shooting

**Ants**—Your wormfarm is too dry. Add a sprinkle of water.

**Smelly / wet worm farm.** A wormfarm should smell like soil. Check that you aren't overfeeding the worms and that the castings are damp, not soggy—add dry shredded paper if needed. Check that the liquid has been drained from the bottom tray.

**Vinegar Flies**—too acidic. Add some wood ash or dolomite and aerate the castings.

**Maggots**—this rarely occurs but if it does, place a piece of bread soaked in milk in your worm farm. Give the maggots 10-15 minutes to latch onto the bread and then remove the whole thing—maggots and all and put into your compost or rubbish bin.

