

Performing the Vermicompost Experiment

Materials	Procedure
<p>You will need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shallow container with lid or cover (approximately three feet long, two feet wide, and one foot high)• Scale• Large, clean, watertight bin or garbage can for mixing bedding material• Four-litre jug or measuring cups• Two handfuls of soil• One pound of red-wiggler worms (red-wiggler worms can be found in the top 6 inches of soil, dark areas, in organic matter)• Shredded paper (bedding)• Food scraps (leftover from your lunch or dinner)• Black plastic sheet	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Slowly mix the soil, water, and shredded paper together in a bin or garbage can until it is all moistened. Then, distribute this mixture evenly throughout the worm bin.2. Lightly add worms to the top of the bedding.3. After, place a piece of black plastic over top of your bin to keep the moisture and light out.4. Then, add food scraps to the bin by burying them beneath one corner of the bedding, and rotate the corner each time new food is added.5. Keep track of which foods the worms are consuming and remove any that begin to smell or that the worms are not eating. Make note of this discovery.

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Your Observations

Consider the following points, and record your observations in a notebook or another method of your choice:

- Keep a log of food that you are adding and what is being eaten by the worms. Did you notice food scraps that the worms always ate and ones that they not?
- Is the bedding staying damp or beginning to dry out?
- Do you see any baby worms or cocoons?
- What other organisms can you find in the vermicompost? Draw a sketch of what you notice.
- Observe how many more worms you have now than when you started?
- Are you noticing an eruption of fruit flies? Try microwaving or freezing the food before putting it in your vermicompost.

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Conclusions

Respond to the following questions and record your ideas using a method of your choice:

- What was important to consider when caring for your worm bin?
- Why do we use worms to recycle food scraps?
- What foods did worms like best? What foods took a long time to break down?
- What other organisms did you observe in your worm bin?