

BE A Soil Supporter

Composting happens when leaves and dead plant life fall to the ground and slowly decay. This natural process creates a dark layer called **humus**, full of important minerals and nutrients that enrich soil.

We can speed up this process by creating our own composting systems, recycling food scraps and even newspaper to form humus, which can then be used to add nutrients to soil in your garden and potted plants.

WHY BOTHER?

Food scraps and yard clippings make up almost 30% of the waste in landfills. Composting can help reduce that waste.

Less landfill waste means lower methane (a greenhouse gas) emissions and a reduced carbon footprint.

Composting can save money by creating natural fertilizers for your garden.

Send in the worms!

Vermicomposting speeds up the composting process using earthworms (typically red wigglers or *Eisenia fetida*.) These animals eat their weight in organic matter each day, producing **castings** (worm poop!) that are rich in nutrients. Like other compost, vermicompost can be added to soil and improve its ability to support growing plants.

Vermicomposting is typically done in a covered container. It is easy to manage, and requires less space than normal composting methods, making it ideal for classrooms, apartments, and high-density urban areas.



Vermicomposting System



worms

food scraps (no meat, bones or citrus, please) & newspaper

castings

nutrient-filled liquid drains into here, creating 'compost tea'

The bottoms of the top two containers contain holes that allow materials (worms, castings, liquid) to move into lower layers.

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There are 3 bins. The bottoms of the top two containers have holes that allow materials (worms, castings, liquid) to move into lower layers.

The top bin contains worms, food scraps, and newspaper. The food scraps should contain no meat, bones, or citrus.

The middle bin contains the castings. The bottom bin has nutrient-filled liquid that has drained from the middle bin. This liquid can be used as “compost tea.”