



SC Compost Bins

FIND OR BUILD YOUR WORM BIN!

Worm composting is a great alternative for folks who don't have the space or volume of waste to support larger composting systems. Worm bins can be used in apartments, offices, homes & classrooms. The worms stay in the bin & eat household scraps, & the bin gives off little odor. You can't lose! The following are types of worm bins, where to find them, & advantages/disadvantages of each.



Plastic "Storage Container" Worm Bins:

You can buy assembled, 100% recycled plastic worm bins such as A Worm Friendly Habitat, Worm Factory, the Original Vermicomposter, and Worm Barn with pre-drilled ventilation holes, instructions & setup guides, drainage tray, lid & one pound of composting worms. Price ranges from \$30-\$70 depending on size (usually 14 or 21 gallon) and specifics. Visit www.composters.com or www.wormman.com for worm bin choices.

Advantage - Cheap and compact. Good beginner worm bin.

Disadvantage - Retains moisture easily. Take care not to over water (keep bin well-drained); compost can have a mud-like appearance because bins are so wet. No definite outlet for worm compost tea.

Wooden Worm Bins:

Fully assembled wood bins can be purchased from a variety of online stores including www.composters.com and www.ebay.com. The cedar worm bin pictured was purchased on Ebay for \$40. Wood Worm Farms also sells similar bins from \$40 to \$70 at <http://worms.vinfo-help.com>.

Advantage - Unique and aesthetically pleasing (looks like a small coffee table). Great beginner bin. Wood bins evenly distribute temperature throughout the bin.

Disadvantage - Can be expensive. Bins tend to dry out easily. Make sure you check moisture levels frequently. "Worm tea" is more difficult to harvest because compost is drier.



Multi-Level "Worm Condos" -

These specially engineered worm bins are large enough to hold 10,000 to 12,000 worms that eat 5-8 pounds of food a day. The bins are self-sorting upward migration systems. Worms are placed in the bottom tray along with bedding & food. The second tray of bedding is placed on top of the first tray. As the worms finish digesting the food in the first tray, they naturally seek more and migrate upward into the next tray. Worm Tower, Can O' Worms, and Worm Condos can be found at www.composters.com from \$100 to \$250.

Advantage - Compact systems with nozzles to drain "worm tea." Less messy than other bins. Automatically separates food scraps from finished compost (not 100% though). Have new design & colors.

Disadvantage - Expensive bins & complex systems. You can still find worms in the first layers of finished compost. End up sorting some worms from finished compost just like other bins.



How to Build a Worm Bin

Building a worm bin allows more flexibility in size and appearance while giving you the opportunity to decorate.

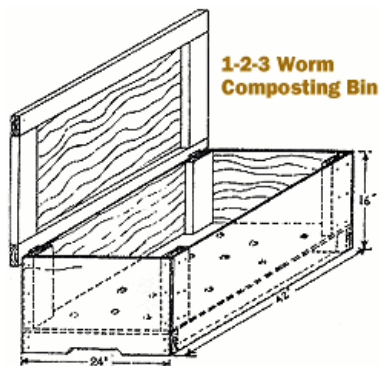
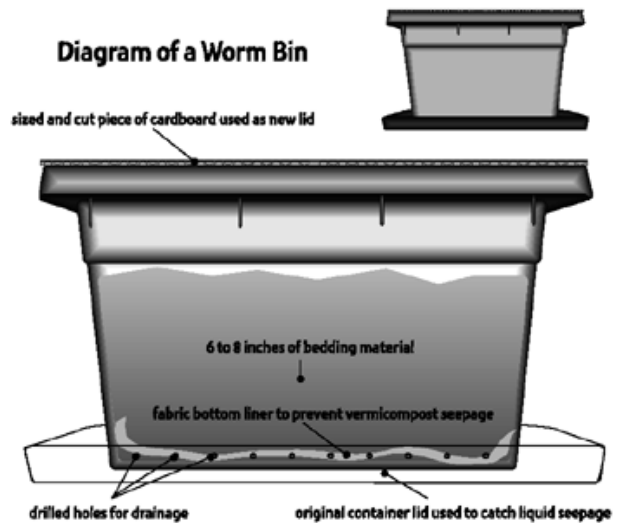
Be Creative! Reuse tile, wood pallets, cinder blocks, dresser drawers & scrap lumber.

Sizing a Worm Bin - To determine your worm bin's optimum size collect your daily scraps, weigh them and calculate an average for the total number of pounds produced per week. Under normal conditions, each square foot of surface area of a worm bin will digest one pound of kitchen scraps per week. To ensure sufficient oxygen, all bins should be between 12 and 18 inches deep. However, If the container is deeper than 18 inches, worms will simply colonize the upper layer where they find the best mixture of oxygen, moisture and food.

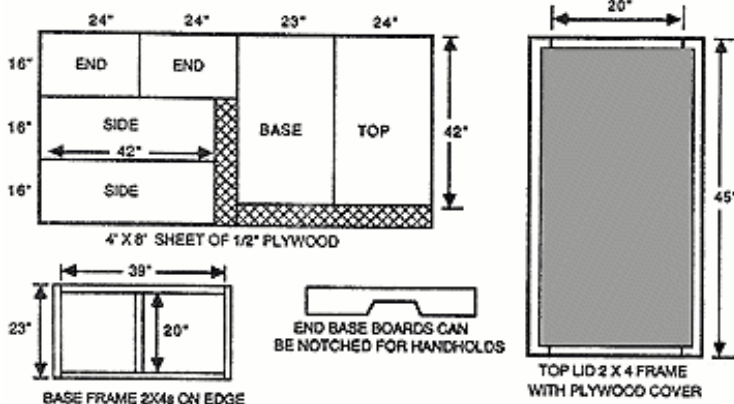
Building a Worm Bin A good worm house must have moist but not wet bedding, plenty of air, but not so much that the worms dry out; a cool but not cold temperature (between 55 & 77 degrees); and an insect and critter resistant lid.

Build a Plastic Worm Bin

- Purchase a 16"x24", 10 gallon (opaque or solid color) plastic storage container (\$10-\$20) or reuse one already in your house.
- Drill drainage holes in the bottom and lay down a piece of fabric (an old sheet works great) inside the container to prevent the vermicompost from clogging drain holes.
- Drill 1/4" to 1/2" ventilation holes about an inch from the top of the bin.
- Design "feet" to prop the bin for proper drainage and ventilation (use small wooden blocks or plastic soda-pop bottle lids).
- Place bin's lid underneath bin to collect nutrient-rich drainage ("worm tea"); aluminum oven pans also work well. Use a piece of cardboard to fit over top of bin.



Construction Details:



Build a Wooden Worm Bin

This bin can be built for about \$35 with new wood and hardware, or less using recycled materials such as old wood boxes, dresser drawers, or other containers. Align, measure and cut plywood as indicated in the "construction details" drawing. For detailed instructions, visit www.gardensimply.com/howto/wormbin.shtml.

Materials:	Tools:
1 1/2" treated sheet of plywood	Tape measure, skill saw or rip hand saw, hammer, saw horses, long straight edge or chalk snap line, screwdriver, and drill with 1/2" bit.
1 12 foot 2"x4	
1 16 foot 2"x4	
2 lbs. 6d galvanized nails	
1/2 lb. 16d galvanized nails	
2 galvanized door hinges	<i>Use eye and ear protection.</i>