

## **Consider Worm Composting**

**by Lauren Rama, Feb. 2009**

A great compost for your house plants, outdoor plants, and lawn too is made by worms! You could have your own worm bin in your home or garage in which worms turn your kitchen waste and newspaper into black gold for your plants.

While it does take some tending (think of those worms as livestock or pets), it is so rewarding to see your waste turned into nutrition for your plants. All you need is a plastic bin with some holes drilled in it. Then you add some shredded newspaper or cardboard in it for "bedding, " add a pound of worms and then kitchen waste (i.e. food scraps except for meat, fats and dairy) - a bit at a time on a regular basis, adding more newspaper as you add more food scraps.

Worms and pre-made bins can be purchased in Calgary from Worms at Work ([wormsatwork.com](http://wormsatwork.com)) or from the Green Calgary Eco-Store ([greencalgary.org](http://greencalgary.org) or 403-230-1443, ext 222).

The kind of worms used in worm bins are usually red wigglers or african nightcrawlers. These are not the same as your normal earthworms. They eat constantly, are really clean, carry no known human diseases, and their digestive enzymes turn really yucky stuff into great soil!

You do need to make sure you keep the bin moist but not wet, keep the food scraps covered with "bedding," and once every three months you can harvest half a bin of compost. I have kept my bin in the furnace room or the garage (with a heater), so that the worms stay warm and the occasional earthy smell is away from the main part of the house.

If you are going to get a worm bin, learn from an expert and get the book "Worms Eat my Garbage" by Mary Applehof. It has everything you need to know to worm compost well.

By worm composting, you will keep food waste out of the landfill where it creates methane gas harmful to the environment, you will have a fun ongoing relationship with the cycle of life, and you will get great compost for your house and yard. Using worm compost, you won't need to use chemical fertilizers for your lawn, which end up leaching into the watershed (including

Fish Creek) and harming the aquatic ecosystem.

Laureen Rama owns Eco-Yards™, a landscape design, installation, and health (spraying actively aerated compost tea) business. Her book: *Eco-Yards™ : Simple steps to earth-friendly landscapes* is available at booksellers and at her web-site: [www.eco-yards.com](http://www.eco-yards.com).