



Home

Soil
ImportanceIncredible
JourneyAmazing
FactsFun
ActivitiesExplore
Your MindAdopt a
Soil CritterWant to
Know More?Kids'
Gallery

Make Your Own Earthworm Farm

Materials Needed

1. One dozen (12) night crawlers (buy them from a bait shop) or earthworms (collect from dark-colored moist soils)
2. One or two dishpans or deep containers
3. Soil to fill the containers
4. Dry plant material

Steps

1. **Fill containers with soil.** Fill one or two dishpans or deep containers with soil. Do not use peat and do not use soil with much sand—it is rough on the skin of worms. Ouch! The soil should be kept moist, but not soggy. Moisten the soil slowly, if needed. It is a good idea to punch a drain hole in the dishpan to make sure no water stays at the bottom.
2. **Add earthworms.** Put the earthworms on the surface of the soil in one pan. The other pan can be used to see what happens to the soil without earthworms. Be sure the worms get plenty of darkness every day so they can work at the surface. If the container has clear sides, keep it covered most of the time to prevent algae growth. The sides can be uncovered briefly each day or for a whole day occasionally.

Caution: A sick worm can infect and kill the whole bunch. Avoid this by removing dead worms quickly (if possible), and by starting with healthy worms. They should be plump, quick-moving, and show no physical damage.

3. **Sprinkle dry plant material on the surface.** Use dry leaves, grass clippings, or plant material from your yard or a nearby field. Make a single thin layer leaving some soil visible. If you use two pans, be sure both have the same type and amount of material.

4. **Watch what happens.** Once a day, for at least a week, take a look in the pan to see if anything changes. Look for burrow openings, worm poop, and the disappearance of plant material. The worms will bury the plant material in the soil and also mix the soil.

For further information, e-mail Content Manager BLM Soil Scientist Bill Ypsilantis

[Top of Page](#) | [Back](#) |

| [Home](#)