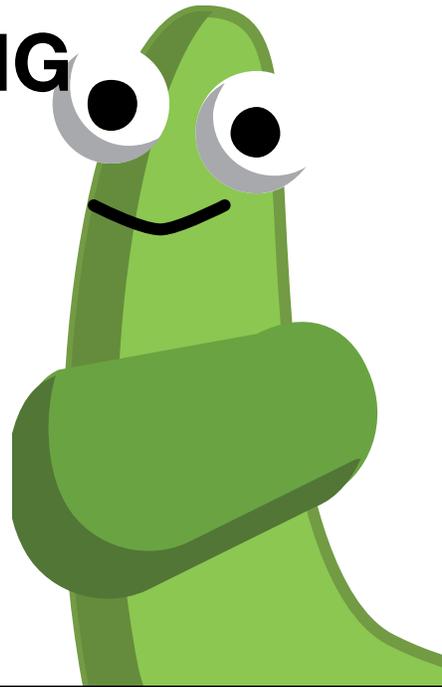


INDOOR VERMICOMPOSTING

With KAREN ABRAMS!



Are you an apartment dweller who's always dreamed of composting, but thought it was only for those outdoor types? A compost-curious homeowner afraid of unwanted raccoons feasting your food scraps? Go get yourself some worms and have a seat. I've got the solution for you.

Vermicomposting, or worm composting, is the indoor method of composting that uses worms to process organic food waste into nutrient-rich soil. Worms eat decaying food waste and produce vermicompost, an effective soil amendment. Food scraps and other organic waste accounts for 30% of what we throw away each year, and worm composting is great way to divert that waste from our landfills (cutting down on methane emissions) and create wonderful fertilizer for gardens and/or house plants. Within one month, you will notice a significant reduction in the waste you put in your garbage can!

Your Worm Wishlist

Worms Hate

Meat
Fish
Dairy
Fatty, greasy, oily foods
Chemicals
Inorganic Material
Light

Worms Like

Fruit & veggie scraps including peels and pits (avoid onion, garlic and citrus)
Egg shells, rinsed
Coffee grounds & paper filters
Tea bags (no staples!)
Bread
Dead leaves
Cardboard & newspapers (shredded, no glossy papers!)



HARVESTING

It will take 3-6 months for the compost to harvest. At that point, you're going to have to touch the worms to separate them from their castings. Don't worry, they don't bite!

To learn more about composting indoors and out, go to PCR's website and look for a workshop. They also provide free bins!

<http://www.zerowastepgh.org/ZW-PRC-byvc.html>

PCR is also sponsoring events on hard-to-recycle products that won't go in your compost.

THERE ARE 2 WAYS TO COMPOST

1. Boring and Expensive: <http://www.hayneedle.com/product/cascadewormfactory360wormcomposter.cfm>
2. Cool and Fun: <http://karenabrams.tumblr.com/tagged/vermicomposting>

Since you're going with option #2 ...You will need:

- 2 storage containers
- 1 fiberglass screen
- Duct tape
- A small plastic hand rake

You can find everything at a home and garden store for less than \$30.

1. Get some simple tips and instructions here: <http://www.mnn.com/food/healthy-eating/blogs/simple-instructions-for-indoor-composting>
2. Shred some newspaper, cardboard and dead leaves from house plants
3. Find an appropriate, but warm spot in your apartment or house to place the bin. The kitchen is probably the wisest and most convenient since you'll be adding mostly food scraps.
4. Pick up some red wigglers, the worms for indoor composting, from the Pennsylvania Resource Council (www.prc.org) on the South Side (\$10.00)

There is a science to all of this, but once you learn the do's and don't's it will become second nature. If you're doing it right, it should not smell. If you're doing it wrong, you can always repair the damage. Worms are resilient!

