

# How to Create a Worm Farm that Works!



Composting with Worms is easy,  
so long as you know these  
few Golden Rules...

**By Lynda Ford**

# HOW TO CREATE A WORM FARM THAT WORKS!

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## INTRODUCTION

### *Who Are We?*

“We are nature’s true recycling wonders that have been making topsoil- Earth’s fertile, protective skin- since millennia. We are the most consistent, persistent, environmental stewards on Earth and we do so willingly, tirelessly and without pay. We guess to some we may appear a little icky and wriggly, but overlook our exterior and you will be rewarded by our virtues and endless energy. Many people have us, but we’re not the internal, parasitic variety.....of course you know who we are, we are compost worms and we enjoy the challenge of helping you to reduce the amount of organic waste that you send to landfill!”

Did you know that every year almost 30% of all solid waste dumped into landfill is organic waste? The good thing about knowing this, is that it IS possible to make a difference to this statistic and take responsibility for the organic waste that we create daily, by recycling it before it leaves our lives, destined for the tip.

Compost worms are the key to enable this practice to occur easily and practically, without a great amount of effort on your part.

You would be familiar with the term “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle”- well, compost worms help us to fulfill all three of these tasks- such multi-tasking is considered highly revered in Permaculture, because anything which reduces energy use and provides more than one benefit from it’s existence is embraced enthusiastically! In the first instance, a worm farm *re-uses* organic waste that otherwise would be thrown out as rubbish. Secondly, we infact are *recycling* such waste product by turning it into something more useful. Thirdly, we *reduce* the need to buy other inputs such as solid or liquid fertiliser. Such is the magic of sustainable living practices- not to mention the genuine feeling of satisfaction which is gained from “doing your bit” for our environment- even if it really is the worms doing all the hard work! (Shhh....I won’t tell anyone!)

Hi, my name is Lynda Ford and I have been working with worms for 30 years - and I am still learning more about these amazing little critters!

I began my explore into the value of Compost worms for use in domestic reusing and recycling of organic waste, back when I was only 18yrs of age. I had not long completed a trade Certificate in Horticulture and had discovered the challenge of gaining employment in what seemed a rather male dominated industry – coupled with living in a small country town in regional Victoria meant there was fierce competition for available jobs. I decided to turn a disadvantage to an advantage and learn as much as I could about commercial worm farming and so... my first business enterprise was born!

I ran the Worm farm business full time for a number of years, I then scaled back to maintain it as just one part of my business, allowing time and focus to be shared with my other pursuits- Permaculture Design, Massage therapy, Organic Product retail.....and don’t forget motherhood!

I have always held a passion for Earth stewardship and holistic health of mind, body and spirit. I am privileged to integrate my ethical ideals into enterprise through my current business, Wild Banksia, where I offer support and guidance as a Positive Life Support Coach, Quantum Healing Hypnosis Practitioner and

Magnesium Massage Therapist from my home clinic at Metung. You can read more about these service offerings at my website: [wildbanksia.com.au](http://wildbanksia.com.au)

Perhaps this is the first time you have chosen to use worms to convert your organic waste.... or maybe you have started a worm-farm before and had a disaster! (I hope not ☹). But this is largely my reason for writing this e-book... to ensure you get off to a flying start with a successful worm farm 'recycle station'!

When I first got going with worms, all those years ago, I was an absolute sponge for information! And even that did not stop me having my own first major disaster and losing 1/2 of my breeding stock. So began my first steep learning curve! I hope that my failures and successes over the years are of great benefit to you, to help you avoid some classic mistakes when looking after your new members of the family.

This how-to guide has been written to ensure you get off to a flying start to develop the right habits caring for your worms and can avoid some of the misinformation that sometimes is shared. Although it is quite easy really to compost with worms, I believe some gardening shows have been guilty of making it seem almost 'too easy'. Like all activities, there are basic "golden rules" to be followed to get it right- so let's get on with it!

## ***Chapter 1- Native Earthworms vs Introduced European Earthworms.***

**Different types of Worms require different living environments.**

European Compost worms differ from their soil dwelling Australian Native cousins, mainly due to their desire to live in decomposing organic material rather than in soil. They have an insatiable appetite for organic waste which they like to consume and live within and tend to stay near the surface of the medium in which they live.

Whereas, native earthworms prefer to live in soil and move evenly throughout the soil horizon, moving from the surface area, deep down into the adjoining soil layers. This makes them very adjustable to fluctuations in soil temperature and enables them to move wherever the ideal environment is for them throughout the seasons. So this means when the hot dry Australian Summer hits and the soil begins to dry out, they simply move downwards to where the soil is moister and cooler.

Due to compost worms preferring manures, mulch, leaf litter and other decomposing organic material to live in, they are our perfect waste converter companions and best harnessed to do this job by being placed into a 'managed' wormfarm, rather than left 'uncontained' in soil. They can adapt and survive quite well in the soil of a garden bed which is heavily mulched, manured and watered throughout Summer, but unless you have all these three factors in alignment, they are likely to die, or at best go searching for a better, more hospitable living room.

When you buy compost worms, I always believe that it is a better investment to utilise your worms in a contained worm farm to get the optimal benefit for your household. Contained worms convert your household waste far more efficiently- period. It gives you a specific place to put your organic rubbish and because it is contained, you have the benefit of harvesting worm castings (worm poo), directly from one place, to use as you see fit-you have a choice where you use it.

Whether that be on your garden, around your fruit trees, roses, put into a potting mixture or as a liquid fertiliser on seedlings and your indoor pot-plants. Think of it this way- when worms are put into the garden....whoopie!! Let's go exploring!! Let's go further afield!!

They have less distraction to go walkabout when put into a purpose built wormbed, (so long as you keep conditions ideal for them), than if they are put in the garden-even if placed nearby to a 'food station', which is one of the more recent promoted styles of setting up your worms.

The best chance they have to survive in soil, is when born into that environment- such as when you have dug worm castings, into your garden and it has lots of worm eggs in it waiting to hatch! They will thrive under such conditions then, so long as you keep watering and mulching! So I believe this is the best way to naturally increase worm numbers and activity in your garden.

For the purpose of this book, we will now be focusing only on European Composting earthworms.

## ***Chapter 2- Compost Worm Varieties used by Summerland Worms.***

The three most commonly used cool temperate compost worm varieties are:

- Red Wigglers (*Lumbricus rubellus*);
- Tiger Worms (*Eisenia fetida*);
- Red Tiger worms (*Eisenia andrei*).

They all happen to be Introduced European Worms and they are well known for their high reproduction rates and big appetites. As I noted previously, they prefer a compost environment, rather than living in soil and thus makes them ideal for reproducing commercially for domestic waste conversion.

They can consume their own weight in organic material every 24hrs, producing castings as the by-product, providing us with a great opportunity to exploit their natural daily habits. For every measure of waste fed to them, it converts into 2/3rds of that same measure in castings. As such, they are one of nature's most efficient waste converters and play a pivotal role in reducing the amount of organic based waste every family throws out into landfill – incredible when you think about it...waste one minute, natural fertiliser the next!

Worms reach sexual maturity in about 60-90 days after hatching.

They will lay an egg once a week on average when conditions are comfortable for worms and in that egg there will be anything from 1-20 worms! 4 worms are the most common number to be found per egg however. It takes a worm egg 21 days to incubate (the same as a chook!) and then if conditions are right, they will hatch- if they are not, worm eggs can go into an induced hibernation and wait for conditions to improve.

Worm eggs look a lot like little tiny balls of the fertiliser 'Osmocote'! Shortly after being laid they are a milky colour, but as they get close to hatching they become a more translucent yellow/brown rusty colour.

Breeding virtually stops when the temperature drops below 10 degrees Celsius, or increases above 27 degrees. They do not enjoy temperatures over 30 degrees and such temperatures can even kill worms if not provided with plenty of cooling moisture and evaporative air flow. Generally speaking of the worm breeds that I mention here, they are more tolerant of cooler temperatures than hotter ones- but freezing WILL kill them.

I have found that when you have a well managed wormfarm which has a reasonable quantity of bedding and food, the actual volume of material helps to provide a buffer against extreme temperatures, as it takes quite a number of consecutive days of high temperature to really warm the bed up and as I mentioned, air flow, shade and water will always allow the worms to cope with those hot summer days 'out of the blue'.

Now should you be considering putting worms to work, then there are some very important 'rules of thumbs' to be mindful of.

### ***Chapter 3- Efficient Waste Conversion***

The aim of an effective worm farm is to achieve as efficient and thorough waste conversion as quickly as possible. To achieve this, it is recommended to start off purchasing enough worms for use in your worm farm to serve the volume of waste your family creates.

If, for example, you estimate that your family discards 1kg of kitchen scraps every day, then you would be advised to begin with 1kg of worms for your worm farm. Another method of calculating via a general rule of thumb, is to start off with 250g of worms for every member of the house. These are only suggestions to enable the quickest conversion rate of your waste into castings, however if you are feeling a little more patient and don't mind them building up their numbers gradually over 6 months and so too their appetites...then you can simply start with 250g to get you on your way. Compost worms are fast breeders and will double their numbers every few months if provided ideal conditions. So you can see what a difference 6 months will make to your stock numbers!

The other value in only investing in a small number to start with, is that if you have never had experience in caring for worms, then maybe best to start with less mouths to feed and get to know their habits, likes and dislikes. I want you to experience success managing your worms and that is why I am sharing with you here the most important 'how-to-care-for-your-wormies facts', to ensure they continue to smile under your care! However, from my experience of 20yrs in this business, I have discovered that instructions are not always followed, or when people go away on a Summer holiday, they sometimes forget about the conditions or temperatures their worms have been left in to fend for themselves!

Now I believe being forewarned is forearmed. By no means is it difficult to care for worms- in addition to this, composting with worms is a heaps easier way to convert waste than the rather labour intensive task of piling compost waste and then turning it daily to aerate- or the anaerobic composting method where you keep tossing in your waste into a plastic lidded bin on the ground and it seems to take 'forever' before you have usable, friable compost.

## ***Chapter 4- Choice of Worm Farms.***

Before you buy your worms, you will need to have made your decision whether you will buy a ready-made worm farm or create one yourself.

Worm farms are widely available now and can be generally purchased from all good Nurseries or Major Hardware stores; even Aldi Stores have stocked worm farms before! If you choose to go this way, it is important that you follow all manufacturer's instructions that accompany your worm farm purchase, for setting it up in readiness to receive your worms. Beyond that, please follow this worm care guide to manage your worms correctly.

Otherwise, if you like recycling materials or are simply a whizz at making things, you may much prefer to make a home constructed worm farm from new or recycled materials. If you wish to try your hand at a homemade design, hopefully I can share some food for thought here.

Your new members of your family will need their home ready for them when they arrive, so no matter which choice you make, it is important that you ensure it is ready and waiting for your brood before ordering.

Here is a couple of ideas.

### **Polystyrene Box Worm farm**

The easiest method I know to set up a quick, cheap worm farm which will accommodate 250g of worms to start with, is by using two secondhand, lidded poly boxes of the same shape and size and which you can often get hold of for little or no cost from vegetable stores. Simply place the first one onto the ground without its lid on, then sit the second straight on top of the bottom one, after having first poked at least about 8-12 holes in the bottom with the use of a large nail. This allows for good drainage and also enables the bonus of capturing any liquid(gold!) nutrient that drains off the top box into the lower poly box. If you have a piece of nylon flyscreen at hand- or shade cloth will do too- then you can cut it to fit the box to lay across the holes for good measure to ensure they do not become blocked OR allow any wormies to slide down into the lower zone of the box below to drown.

A poly box is quite small, so you do not really wish to put more than 250g worms into a worm bed of this size, as I mentioned previously. You will need to allow some room for breeding to occur and numbers to increase. But of course there is nothing to stop you from setting up as many of these worm farms as you wish!

### **Bath-tub Worm farm**

Another good backyard method to set up for a relatively quick worm farm design is to utilise an old bathtub. Preferably set it up off the ground on a frame or on bricks, just high enough to enable a bucket to be slid under the plughole, so once again the run-off won't be wasted. You will have to fill up an old onion bag or stocking with a mix of scoria/gravel/sand and put it into the plughole space before placing any organic material into the bath, otherwise it will clog up very quickly with sediment after worm bed establishment and prevent adequate drainage.

## **Larger Free-form Worm farm on Ground**

For a bigger worm bed you can lay out some black plastic on the ground allowing the plastic to extend a bit beyond an area of approx. 1m x 1.5m, at which dimension you would be creating the edges of your worm bed up to a height of about 60cms with whatever material you have on hand, such as bricks, recycled timber, limestone ashlar, corrugated iron. It is important that the ground has a slight slope to allow for drainage across the plastic. The reason plastic is used instead of weedmat is because we do not want tree roots invading the worm bed and sucking the 'life' from it.

**#Caution!** Fibrous tree roots just love the moisture and fertility in castings and can enter a bed without you even being any the wiser until you dig down one day and find a mat of tree roots and one bone dry wormbed!

I learnt this lesson first hand in the first 6 months of getting my commercial sized worm farm up and running. I had not been warned against this possibility of tree root invasion and had lined all my worm beds which were set up on the ground, with weedmat to ensure good drainage. The nearest gum tree would not have been less than 6-8 metres away. So it was rather unexpected and I was none the wiser, for the fine fibrous 'feeder roots' from the trees sending out their tendrils underground, to suck all the delicious nutrients and moisture from the worm castings. By the time I went to harvest and divide the worms out from the castings, I discovered that halfway down into the bed, it was dry as a bone! Not to mention a lot of worms had slowly but steadily disappeared to seek more ideal conditions.

Over the years I have also discovered that worms prefer slightly damper conditions to drier. The muscles which surround their digestive tube are filled with water to assist with strong forward propulsion and they absorb this liquid from food they consume and through the material they live within. Worms do not enjoy sliding around in dry conditions, as they will dehydrate, without being able to produce and exude a mucous medium which assists their travels, nor be able to eat food that has no moisture in it.

Keep in mind that the wetter a worm bed becomes, the less oxygen will be present. Worms absorb oxygen from the medium they live in and as water increases, it pushes out the oxygen, which means the worms will suffocate unless they move to the surface. So worms don't like to live in a dry dust bowl, NOR in a muddy puddle!

## ***Chapter 5- Getting Started***

Simply spread an approximate 10cm layer of old horse or cow manure that has been well moistened. Alternatively you can use coco-peat, but you must ensure that it is a pure product and does not have any additives such as wetting agents or fertilisers. Ensure the coco-peat brick is left to soak up plenty of moisture in a bucket of water, then break up into a friable mix before putting it in as the base bedding to start off your wormbed. Tip your worms directly onto the bedding, then cover the whole bed with a cover. This helps to retain surface moisture, a more even bed temperature and blocks out the sunlight.

**Choice of covers-** Compost worms are surface feeders, so if you want your worms to be very actively eating and converting your organic waste, it is very important to keep the surface of your worm bed dark and moist.

You can use such as the following for this purpose: damp piece of old carpet, old hessian bags, old woollen jumpers, cotton t-shirts, thick cardboard or layers of newspaper. The benefit of thick material or carpet over paper or cardboard, is that it holds moisture for longer. You will find that through the Summer, if you let the covers dry out, then the worms will not be as active on the surface (which means slower conversion of your waste) and it also results in their food drying out quicker as well. If their food dries out then they stop eating it, as they are unable to eat anything which is dry.

**# One bad experience:** I had one customer a few years ago who rang me up saying 'all my worms keep trying to get out of my worm farm, I don't know what I am doing wrong? Some look sick and the others are just trying to do a runner!' We troubleshooted together in an attempt to establish how they had currently set up their worm farm and the food they had chosen to feed etc. After a short discussion on the phone, it appeared to me that they seemed to be doing everything right...then it occurred to me to ask if the carpet which they were using as a worm bed cover was new or old? They replied it was a piece of new offcut- BINGO! There are chemicals such as 'Scotchguard', used in carpets to assist us to clean them when we spill something on them- and worms do not like these chemical protectants at all! Over time they seem to 'off gas' and become less potent and some new carpets are much worse than others- you can buy some natural woollen carpets which are not even treated with such product. Just worth keeping in mind when choosing your worm bed covers- I would recommend sticking with old secondhand carpet, or at least ensure you ask a few questions about what the carpet has been treated with first if you are offered a piece of 'new' carpet offcut.

**Ideal moisture level:** should be 30- 40%- so when you pick up any worm bedding or food in your hand, you should be able to squeeze a few drops of liquid from it.

## ***Chapter 6- Menu***

Anything that was once living can be fed to worms. This means it has an organic origin.

**Feeding Habits:** You can begin feeding your worms straight away- the trick is not to overfeed. The aim is not to have a huge pile of rotting, smelly material, but rather try to match the amount fed more closely to your worm's appetites. When you pull back the worm bed covers, you should be able to observe your worms actively feeding on the surface of their food, en mass. You should notice that gradually the food scraps will be losing their definition and become covered in brown specs of soil like material, which is actually worm castings (worm poo!) As the appearance of this increases, you can start adding more food. It is also advisable to feed your worms in 'patches' or 'sections' of the worm bed surface, rather than smother the whole worm bed with food, this way, if you feed them something which they do not like, they are able to get away from it and choose 'not' to eat it. Over time, this indicates to you that a food source may have had an unpalatable chemical on it, or perhaps the patch of food they are not eating is too sodden or alternatively, too dry.

**# What NOT to Do:** Never place your worms into an old compost heap or black plastic bin style compost bin (sometimes known as Gedye Bins). Worm composting is completely different method of composting to either of the above mentioned methods. 1/ Worms prefer to be fed their food, rather than being placed in a big pile of deep, rotting compost- you run the risk of cooking your worms, (as traditional compost heaps should go through a 'hot' decomposition stage) and 2/ The black/or green 'upside down' compost bins infact are an anaerobic method of composting and this means death for worms- they MUST have plenty of air circulating over and through their worm bed. If you have an old compost heap in the garden, that you would like to convert into a more refined end product, then the only option you should consider is to set up your separate wormfarm and then take some organic material from that old compost heap and gradually feed it to your worms in small applications, as was discussed earlier.

**Animal manures:** make great worm food. You can use horse, cow, pig, sheep, goat, rabbit.

**#Caution!** You must ensure that your supply of manure does not have any residue of worm drench (used to kill intestinal worms in livestock), as this will also kill your compost worms. Pelletized manures, like sheep, goat or rabbit, will need soaking in water to soften the hard skin on the pellet surface, before the worms will be able to actively get stuck into eating it. Poultry or pigeon manure is not highly recommended to feed to your worm bed, as it is very strong and unless well aged could well burn your worms.

**Dog and Cat Manure:** This can be fed to your worm bed also, make sure it is nice and damp though and I recommend placing it in sections where you know where it is. You will find that feeding dog and cat poo is rather smelly when you are handling and applying it to your worm bed, until the worms have been hard at work converting it into something far nicer! Interestingly, once worms have consumed food, they actually deodorise any smells- worm castings has no offensive odour and looks and smells just like top quality topsoil.

**Straw/leaf mulch/pulled weeds/grass clippings:** Keep in mind the importance of all food being damp before feeding to worms, thus you must wet down dry leaf litter, straw or mulch before applying. You can pull weeds from the garden (better when young and green, rather than old, dry and woody) and grass clippings can be applied, however must be sprinkled very sparingly and not applied in clumps, as they will heat up as they decompose. Any green material has the potential to heat up in this same way, so chop it up before applying and only place a thin layer as food, rather than pile it up. Any woody weeds or prunings are best left for a general compost heap, as they have to start decomposing before worms will touch them (unless you have a mulcher which will certainly quicken this process)- remember that worms can only start eating food which is softened and beginning to rot down.

**Paper and cardboard products:** must be torn up or shredded and well soaked. Worms seem to rather enjoy the glues which are used to create cardboard and love to get into the layers of the cardboard that you will notice more as it expands with moisture.

**Household waste:** vegetable scraps, fruit, bread, leftovers, hair, dust, cotton or woollen fabric- it is a good idea to chop up scraps into small pieces for more rapid breakdown.

**Other good habits:** are to ensure all food fed to worms is always moist; once every fortnight apply a light dusting of garden lime or dolomite over the food in the worm bed to prevent it getting too acidic- this is particularly necessary if you are feeding a lot of vegetable and fruit scraps. Always keep a cover on your worm bed as discussed earlier, directly over the food and it is also ideal to have an all- weather lid, so you can monitor and protect against extreme temperatures and excessive rainfall.

**Notes about citrus and onion:** Everyone has probably heard that it is not recommended to feed these two to your worms, mostly due to their acidity- however I would just like to explain a little more and debunk this logic.

If you feed a lot of kitchen scraps to your worm-farm, you inevitably will be feeding quite a lot of foods that are acidic. For example, tomatoes, pineapple, some cooked leftovers and you may not even realise it, but bread is very acidic too! But you don't get told not to feed these other acidic fruit, scraps or bread to your worms....so why is that?

The difference with citrus peel and onion skin, is that they are quite water repellent. This is really the main reason that should be cited, to warrant any discouragement of feeding them to worms. When something is water repellent, it means that it sheds the water, rather than absorbs it, which in turn results in a long decomposition cycle. Worms cannot eat something until it is starting to rot (decompose). So you CAN choose to feed them to your worms, but to try to speed up the decay, it is best to chop up as small as possible, to open up more skin surface area to encourage it to suck in moisture as quickly as possible.

As I mentioned earlier, a good dusting of garden lime or dolomite once weekly over your worm bed surface area will help keep excess acidity at bay. Once a worm has digested food, it in fact neutralises acidity that was in the organic waste. Worms don't seem to mind eating acidic food, but if you don't intermittently dust garden lime onto your worm farm to counter regular application of acidic food, you will find your bed will gradually become overwhelmed with what are called- 'white worms'. Now, although these do not harm your compost worms and can co-exist quite successfully with them, they do tend to reproduce much quicker under ideal (acidic) conditions. They always remain very small and will not take long to breed up to numbers which appear as sizeable clumps of wriggly white 'baby' size worms. They simply become a bit too competitive. It is quite acceptable to have them in your worm farm, as they too can do their bit for waste conversion, but it is best to just manage their numbers by removing excess worms and dusting with garden lime.

## ***Chapter 7- Worms Don't like Extremes***

**It is important to protect your worms against extremes in temperatures or conditions.**

Poly box farms are very convenient as they are portable, come with their own lid and are well insulated against the elements- but as with other small commercial models, like the ReIn Worm Factory or Can'O'Worms, they are best to keep in part shade come the Summer time in addition to removing the lid during high temperatures. If you are in a climate of extreme heat or cold, then it will pay to temper any open worm bed with a lid that will protect against excess rain, cold & can provide shade in Summer.

Also keep in mind that incorrectly applied food can excessively heat up a worm bed, so intermittently dig into your worm bed mixture with gloved hands or a garden fork, turning it over checking for heat- just warm is fine, but anymore than this and you had best water down or turn mix over to aerate it. It is a good habit to regularly get up close and personal with your worm farm anyway, to check that the moisture levels are not too wet and not too dry, by turning some of the worm bed mixture over.

## ***Chapter 8- The End Result: Worm Castings!***

Castings or Vermicast, (as it is also known as)-is precious gold to your garden, it is beautiful rich top soil that is alive with microbes and beneficial bacteria AND it should be filled with worm eggs to boot! That is what the worms have been toiling so hard to make, simply from your rubbish that otherwise would have been sent to fill up a hole in the ground... amazing isn't it!

When worms consume organic waste, their digestive system not only helps to neutralise the pH of the food of which they eat, but it also liberates nutrients which are 'locked away', making them into a plant-available soluble form. This digestive process is undertaken by enzyme producing bacteria, which not only activate castings, but are excreted IN the castings also, so it is a 'win win'. This is a supreme example of absolute harmony in nature where worm activity also increases microbial/enzyme activity, nutrient availability and moisture holding capacity of any soil which castings is applied.

To harvest the castings, first harvest your worms! The easiest way to do this is by attracting them to several clumps of freshly applied organic waste, cover to keep nice and moist and completely dark, and within a couple of days most will be congregated there. You gather up all of the worm laden food and put that into a new worm farm to start all over again. To give you the heads up, worms especially love pumpkin, watermelon, (skin side up for both of these), banana, horse manure, well soaked cardboard- you'll get to know their favourites! You will need to feed and harvest the worms a few times over the course of one week before you will have managed to remove all the worms.

If you have trouble getting all the worms out of your castings, then you can choose to finish off placing bucketfuls of the castings onto a smooth bench-top (can cover the table with black plastic like a tablecloth) breaking up all the large clods so it is friable texture and pile the material into a basic pyramid shape. As the light shines on the surface the worms wriggle away into the centre of the pile, so you continue to rake down the outside material, stopping when you hit worms, then repeat once the light has sent them inwards again.

Castings are one of the most favoured soil conditioners and natural fertilisers for your plants. Use your castings to top dress around plants, water and cover well with mulch; place in the hole at planting time to give your precious trees, shrubs, roses or seedlings a kick start; or use in a commercial potting mix- just tip a large bag of basic potting mixture into your wheelbarrow followed by a 10 litre bucket of castings as well and combine thoroughly. You can also dilute castings with water at a 20% dilution rate, let it soak overnight and use as a liquid fertiliser the next day. This is fabulous to apply to your plants in pots or on young vegetable seedlings.

Worm castings will become the life of your garden and you will wonder how you ever managed without it- all thanks to organic waste and worms- treat it AND your worms, like precious gems!

If you require any further guidance in managing your worms, I welcome your questions on email at: [lynda@wildbanksia.com.au](mailto:lynda@wildbanksia.com.au)

*Here's to living happier with worms in your life!*

*Lynda Ford*