

Frequently Asked Questions about Worm Castings

Riverdale Horticultural Society (RHS) 2024 Fundraiser

What are earthworm castings?

Also referred to as “vermicompost” and “vermicast”, worm castings are a remarkably rich, all-natural, plant growth promoting soil amendment. It is odourless and has the texture of coarse coffee grounds or peat moss. They are the excretions left behind by worms after they finish digesting the organic matter that makes up their diet. Yes, worm poo.

What are the benefits of using worm castings?

- Stimulating plant growth and increased root development
- Providing water-soluble nutrients to the plants
- Helping plants fight disease
- Improving soil texture and water retention

What do worm castings contain?

Worm castings contain a highly active biological mixture of bacteria, enzymes, remnants of plant matter, and animal manure, as well as earthworm cocoons (while damp). The castings are rich in water-soluble plant nutrients, and *contain more than 50% more humus than what is normally found in topsoil.*

Worm castings are packed with minerals that are essential for plant growth, the best of all is that these minerals are immediately available to the plant, without the risk of ever burning the plant. Remember that animal manure and chemical fertilizers have to be broken down in the soil before the plant can absorb them.

What is unique about how worm castings benefit soil?

As the organic matter moves through the alimentary canal of the earthworm, a thin layer of oil is deposited on the castings. This layer erodes over 2 months. So although the plant nutrients are immediately available, they are slowly released to last longer. The cocoons in worm castings each contain between 2 and 10 eggs that hatch within 2 weeks.



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This means that the process of decomposition is continued by the young earthworms in the soil, provided that the soil is loose, damp, and rich enough in organic matter for the worms to stay alive.

The bacteria in the alimentary canal of the earthworm transform organic waste into natural fertilizer. The chemical changes that the organic wastes undergo include deodorizing and neutralizing. This means that the pH of the castings is 7 (neutral) and the castings are odourless (they smell like a forest after rain). The worm castings also contain the bacteria, so the process is continued in the soil, and microbiological activity is promoted.

Can worm castings be used indoors?

Worm castings can be used as an ingredient of potting soil (as plant nutrients) for plants in and around the house. It can also be used as a planting additive for trees, vegetables, shrubs, and flowers. When used as mulching material, worm castings will ensure that the minerals are absorbed directly into the soil when watered. Because worm castings will never burn plants, you can use as much of it as you like.

Added to potting soil, used during transplanting, applied as a top dressing, or as a tea, however, if you choose to use earthworm castings, your flowers, vegetables, and houseplants will benefit and respond with additional growth and vigour.

How do I order worm castings from RHS?

- Orders can be placed by email at rhwormcastings@gmail.com
- Orders can be up to four days before the chosen pick-up date
- Pick ups will be in the Riverdale area between noon and 4:00 pm on
 - Sunday, April 28th or
 - Saturday, May 11th
- Payment will be cash only

