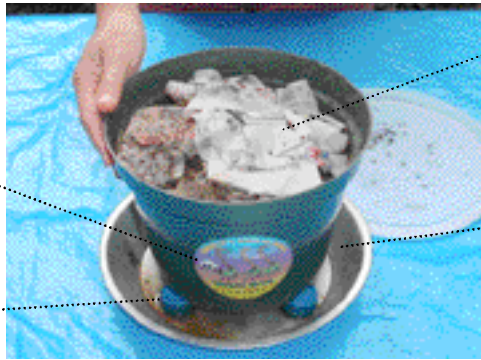


How to Harvest your MINI-BIN in Eight Easy Steps

A Healthy, Mature Mini-Bin

Check your Bin Start Date. Mini-Bins reach maturity in 4 to 5 months. This is the time it takes for the worms to process most of the original paper and cardboard bedding.

The bin has been elevated above a drip pan so that the wet bedding can drain freely. The leachate (moisture that leaches through the bed) is drained frequently.



A 1- to 2-inch cover of moist shredded paper has helped to add structure, retain moisture and air pockets and prevent fruit fly infestations.

A ring of vaseline smeared around the inner edge of the drip pan has kept out those pesky ants!

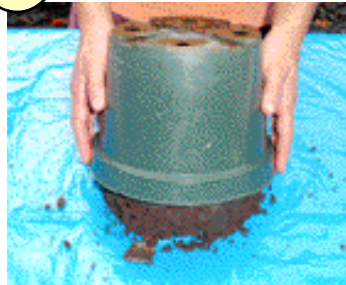
1

Remove top layer of paper and chunks of uneaten food.



2

Turn the bin over and dump everything out. The material will be compressed and stand on its own like a sand castle.



Remove the burlap, screen, or other bottom liner. Remove any large chunks of unprocessed bedding.

3



4



Now get your fingers deep in there and slowly, gently – so you don't hurt any worms – break up all the clumps of compressed material. Don't be afraid to really use your hands to loosen everything up – go for it! The objective is to fluff up the material completely so the worms can easily go down.

Form a mound shape of loose, fluffy material.

First, pick out any chunks of unprocessed stuff – food, paper, or cardboard. You will see that worms are tucked into every little fold of paper or fruit skin. Gently liberate them and let them go down.

Make a separate pile of the uneaten, unprocessed chunks. You now have two mounds. One with worms and vermicast, and one mound of unprocessed material.

5



6

Now start picking away at the mound of loose vermicast, keeping a round mound shape to encourage the worms to move away from the light and form a ball at the bottom of the mound. Start a third pile of finished material – the vermicast.

As you reach the bottom of the mound, you can brush away the last bits of vermicast and uncover your worm ball.



Note: Baby worms may be too small to move down and ball up with the bigger worms, so leave them in the unprocessed material for safe keeping. All unfinished material will be included in the re-bedded bin. (Some tiny babies may also be hidden in the vermicast. Let your vermicast sit – “season” – for a couple of weeks before using it, and carefully pick out any babies left behind.)

7



Separate your worms from the last of the vermicast and gently scoop them up. Has your colony grown? Our Mini-Bins are started with one ounce of worms, a colony about the size of a golf ball. This successful vermicomposter harvested 3.6 ounces of worms and over two pounds of beautiful, nutrient-rich vermicast in her first 4-month cycle. In ideal conditions, worms will double their numbers every 60 days, so this colony is right on track.



If your worm colony has barely increased, you are underfeeding your worms. Try again – trust the process and feed them generously. Be sure to include plenty of nutritious foods like avocado, papaya skins, banana peels, and grains like old rice, tortillas, and moldy bread. Remember they can eat their weight a day.

If you have 4 ounces or more, you are an ace vermicomposter! The current World Record for Mini-Bin reproduction is from one to 8.5 ounces of worms in a single 4-month cycle.

8



Re-bed your worms in fresh bedding made from wet paper and cardboard. Mix the fresh bedding with all the unprocessed material from the old bed.

Whatever container you choose, make your bed 3-1/2” to 4” deep, moderately compressed.

Add worms, food, and a cover of moist shredded paper and you’re ready for another 4 to 5 month cycle.



Move your growing colony to a larger container – we recommend an inexpensive 10-gallon Sterilite or Rubbermaid storage tote. Drill holes in the bottom and lid and elevate with a couple of bricks. Some people prefer to split their colony and make a second Mini-Bin to pass on.