

Boulder worms April 1, 2009

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You can also find most of the content in this newsletter on my blog:
<http://bouldervermicomposting.com>

In this issue:

- * Administrative note
- * Worm return on investment
- * Colorado sources for red worms

ADMINISTRATIVE NOTE

I recently changed the name of my blog from vermicomposting.wordpress.com to bouldervermicomposting.com. I had

registered the domain name a while ago, and wanted to have the focus of the blog reflected in the name. The content

will remain the same....

WORM RETURN ON INVESTMENT

It's amazing how quickly worms can reproduce, as long as you give them a good environment. I have had worms in my

current bin for a couple of years. (You can see pictures of it here:

<http://bouldervermicomposting.com/2008/09/05/my-worm-bin/>)

I have been thinking of selling worms, or at least giving some vermicompost starter away. But I was curious as to

how many worms I had. I came up with a quick estimation process, that may be useful to you. I outline it below.

(This process is full of estimation. Remember, you're just trying to get a quick number--it's not rocket science!)

* Measure your bin. For depth, only measure how deep you've found worms. The dimensions of my worm bin were 24

inches wide x 24 inches long x 16 inches deep.

* Multiply these together to get the volume of vermicompost and worms. Mine turned out to be 9216 cubic inches.

* Fill a tray with vermicompost and measure the volume. My tray had 120 cubic inches.

* Sort the worms out, and weigh them. I estimated the weight at 1.5 oz, which leads me to believe that there were 1

oz of worms in every 80 cubic inches of soil (assuming worms are distributed evenly, which is a big assumption).

* Divide the number of cubic inches of your bin by the ounces of worm per cubic

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inch, then by 16 to get pounds. For me, $9216/80 = 115.2$ oz, and that is approximately 7.2 pounds.

Given that I'd started with 1 pound of worms in spring of 2006, and now have 7 pounds of worms in 2009, that's an

annual rate of return on investment of 93%! Holy cow--who says worms aren't a good deal. And that is only

including the new worms, not the other benefits:

- * vermicompost
- * worm castings
- * reduced carbon emissions
- * education

----- COLORADO SOURCES FOR RED WORMS

I like to support local businesses. I started out with redworms ordered from a company in Michigan (and when my

worms all died, I re-ordered from them because I had had no issues with them). I remember doing a couple of

internet searches for redworms sources around Boulder when I first started, and couldn't find anything. I even

called Gart Sports (a local sporting goods company) to ask what kind of worms they offered for fishing

(nightcrawlers).

When I found a local Boulder company that sold worms last year, I promoted them. Unfortunately, they've decided not

to offer worms any more (<http://bouldervermicomposting.com/2009/02/21/boulder-compost-to-cess-selling-redworms/>).

So, to offer a solution for all the first time worm keepers that are looking for a Colorado source for worms, I've

put together a directory of local sources for redworms, worm castings and worm tea. You can find it here:

<http://bouldervermicomposting.com/colorado-sources-for-worms-and-worm-castings/>

I will be keeping this list up to date as I find more suppliers. (If you know any that I've missed, please contact

me). I've been toying with the idea of putting prices on the list as well, but I imagine prices are pretty

variable. I will say prices I've seen range greatly, so it's worth letting your fingers do the walking and calling

these suppliers. Other important factors when looking to purchase worms include:

- * will they ship the worms to you?
- * do they give you worms alone or worms in vermicompost?
- * do they offer redworms or other species suitable for vermicomposting

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- * how many pounds of worms can you get?
- * how healthy are the worms?
- * are they bed-run worms (variable in age) or breeders (mature adults)

At this time, a number of the suppliers I spoke to could not sell large numbers of worms--over two pounds--and one

or two of them couldn't sell me any worms at all. Their 'worm herds' had been depleted and the suppliers were just

trying to rebuild the populations before they sold any worms.

----- THANKS

Thanks for reading! Any comments or suggestions are welcome. Feel free to reply to this email or contact me

usingthis form: <http://bouldervermicomposting.com/about/>

Until next time,

Dan Moore
<http://bouldervermicomposting.com/>

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