

Boulder Worms Mar 1, 2009

Welcome to the third issue of Boulder Worms, a newsletter for vermicomposters around Boulder and the front range.

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

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- * Buying redworms from Colorado Suppliers

----- HOW I DEAL WITH FOOD SCRAPS

Especially during the winter, food scraps can be a big problem. My redworms are not inside, so I can't just walk to another room in my bathrobe. Food scraps accumulate at different rates (if I make a fruit salad, quite rapidly; chili, not so much). If I leave the scraps for too long, they produce fruit flies and smells, especially when I put meat or meat remnants in there. And since the weather can be cold six months of the year here in Boulder, Colorado, I can't always put the scraps in my bin immediately, as I tend to do during the summer. The reason I can't is because I don't want to expose the worms to cold unnecessarily.

I've tried a variety of solutions for keeping my food scraps inside until I can move it out to my external worm bin, including:

- * having my worm bin inside
- * a 5 gallon bucket full of leaves and some vermicompost
- * zip lock baggies

Things that I have not tried that I've read or heard about include

- * freezing all scraps
- * fruit fly traps
- * compost keepers

(<http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B000K76CPK?ie=UTF8&tag=vermandvermin-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B000K76CPK>)

As an aside, I don't like the idea of freezing the scraps because

- * my freezer is typically full
- * the whole point of vermicomposting for me is to reduce my garbage and overall impact on the earth

Below, I outline the system that works for me. I have two or three 1 gallon coffee containers.

I fill one (container A) up with food scraps. Since it is airtight, the smells don't escape, and you have no flies. It does get pretty funky and moldy in there, depending on what scraps I'm putting in. I'll put everything in there, including liquids (coffee, etc).

When it is full, I take it out and dig a hole in my bin. I empty the container into the bin. If it is really funky, sometimes I'll fill the container with water and dump that in. I refill the hole with some of the bedding.

Then, I add a bunch of leaves (every fall I grab them from the curb and store them on my patio) for additional carbon content.

As for the container, I'll leave it outside, and take another one in (container B). I find that leaving recently used bins outside serves a number of purposes. It:

- * dries out any food scraps that stuck to the side of the container
- * dissipates any smell
- * dries out mold (I don't know if it kills the mold, though)

I have not had any trouble with animals investigating the containers, though I live in a pretty urban environment. After container B fills and I empty it into the bin, I knock whatever dried scraps remain in container A out into the bin or onto the beds, and take it in with me, leaving B to dry.

Are there other good methods for dealing with scraps?

----- BUYING REDWORMS FROM COLORADO SUPPLIERS

I bought my redworms from a supplier in Michigan, but there are a number of worm suppliers in the Rocky Mountain area. Boulder Compost unfortunately has decided to stop selling worms (<http://vermicomposting.wordpress.com/2009/02/21/boulder-compost-to-cess-selling-redworms/>), but there are others.

I have not used any of these vendors; if you end up buying redworms from here, please let me know what your experience was, or if you know any other local vendors of redworms to home worm keepers.

- * The Worm Man, John Anderson: 970-407-9076
- * The Flower Bin, 1805 Nelson Rd., Longmont, 303-772-3454
- * Sandi Wiese WiR Farm Bennett, CO 303 644 4936
- * ABC Composting sells worms and worm bins: <http://abccomposting.com/>
- * Colorado Earthworms sells worms and worm bins: <http://coloradoearthworms.com/>
- * Craigslist occasionally has sellers:
<http://denver.craigslist.org/search/sss?query=worms>
- * <http://vermicomposters.com/> check out the map for your area.

Whoever you buy the worms from, make sure you find out

- * how they'll be shipped, and if you should be home
- * how many worms are to the pound
- * what their return policy is
- * whether they are charging for separated worms, or worms plus vermicompost
- * how the worms were separated (by hand, machine, etc)

It seems like a price of \$20-\$30 a pound, plus shipping is a reasonable fee. Also, consider starting small and adding more later.

----- THANKS

Thanks for reading! I am just starting this newsletter, so any comments or suggestions are welcome. Feel free to reply to this email or contact me using this form: <http://vermicomposting.wordpress.com/about/>

Until next time,

Dan Moore

<http://vermicomposting.wordpress.com/>

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