

Boulder Worms May 6, 2010

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Large Scale Vermicomposting on a Coffee Farm

Via [Clean Technica](#), I found this article about the [Rogers Family Company](#) using [redworms to process their coffee waste](#). Apparently, [coffee processing](#) generates a fair bit of organic waste, and this was decomposing and leaking into groundwater.

So, leveraging techniques used elsewhere, including in [Selva Negra in Chiapas Mexico](#), they set up worm bins on their farm in Panama. The goal? Process 5000 tons of coffee pulp and turn that into free fertilizer for independent growers. The company ended up with "10,000 square meters [of worm bins] filled with a billion worms". I asked why they chose *E. Foetida*, rather than one of the worms more suited to the tropics (as outlined [here \[PDF\]](#)); they haven't answered as of yet--I suspect the reason is the easy availability of *E. Foetida* and the fact that the species is one of the most understood of the decomposers.

But seriously, talk about industrial vermicomposting! I remember reading a while ago about 'decompiculture' ([PDF here](#)) which is the idea of "growing or culturing of decomposer organisms by humans", the same way that agriculture is the growing or culturing of plants and herbivores. Decomposers, whether redworms, bacteria or mushrooms, can help address some of our most fundamental issues of garbage management by turning waste into useful substances. This project showcases decompiculture in a big way.

Pssst! You should complete the cycle and [vermicompost your coffee grounds](#).

Full [press release here](#), and full [blog post with pictures here](#).

EPA promoting worm composting

Last time, I wrote about the UK barber having trouble composting his hair, due to safety regulations. I thought it was only fair to highlight a government agency that was promoting worm composting.

From the [archives](#):

The [EPA](#) (the USA's Environmental Protection Agency) has a [great starter page about worm composting](#), with links to some pretty good information sources and a nice introduction:

Through this method, red worms—not nightcrawlers or field worms found in gardens—are placed in bins with organic matter in order to break it down into a high-value compost called castings. Worm bins are easy to construct (they are also commercially available) and can be adapted to accommodate the volume of food scraps generated.

Again, this is more of a 'what is vermicomposting' page than it is 'how do I start', but I love the fact that the US federal government (in addition to some [local governments](#)) promotes vermicomposting.

Thanks

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

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Until next time,

Dan Moore

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