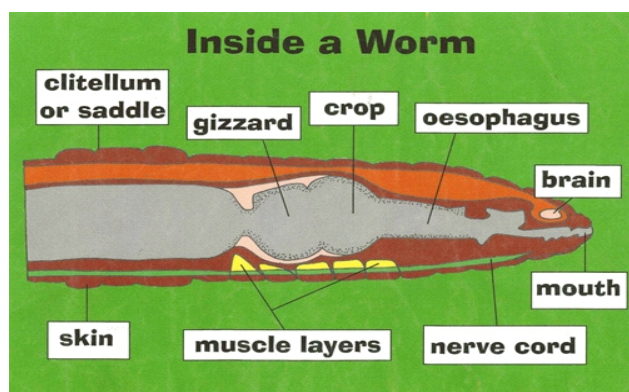


SCRAPPY Activities

Activity 3/6

Wormy Facts!!

- Worms can consume their own body weight in organic waste each day.
- Under ideal conditions, one pair of worms can produce up to 1500 young per year.
- Worm eggs take around three weeks to reach hatching stage and can contain from two to twenty young.
- Worms are hermaphrodites, each worm is both male and female.
- Species of worms used for composting include Red worms (*Lumbricus rubellus*), Tiger worms (*Eisenia fetida*) and Indian Blue worms (*Perionys excavitus*).
- Worms don't like to eat garlic, onion, chillies, meat products or dairy products.
- Worms have FIVE hearts.
- Worms love to eat fruit and vegetables, coffee grounds, leaves, hair, tea bags, newspaper, cardboard, flower prunings, egg shells and cotton.



It's A Wormy World!

Considering that in the Hawkesbury, 22% of the average rubbish bin is food waste, worm farming can make a big difference when trying to reduce our waste and what we send to landfill!

Worms are fascinating creatures, known as 'nature's recyclers', and there are many environmental benefits to having a worm farm. By worm farming, we can recycle our old food scraps, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and reduce the amount of waste we put into our garbage bin each week. Considering that up to half of our household rubbish is made up of organic material, worm farming can make a big difference when trying to reduce our waste!



Worms not only help us minimise our food waste, they also help by turning all our organic kitchen scraps into a nutrient rich fertiliser for our plants and garden! As worms eat, they break down organic food material into 'worm juice' (a liquid fertiliser) and 'castings' (the organic material that has been digested by the worms). This can be collected and placed on garden plants and grass. The liquid needs to be diluted until it is the colour of weak tea.

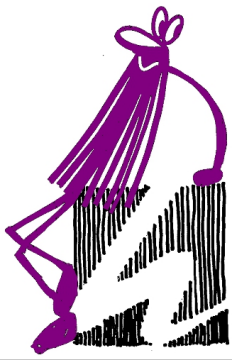
For more info on worm farming, visit:

www.livingthing.net.au/rc/guides/EngWorm2005129.pdf
www.environment.nsw.gov.au/envirom/wormfarm.htm

Interested in starting your own worm farm? They are easy to set up and take care of, and you don't need a big area to keep them. You can set up your farm in a ready made plastic worm farm available from nurseries or hardware stores. Or you can even make you own worm farm using polystyrene boxes. (See the activity over the page).



Living sustainably in the Hawkesbury



SCRAPPY Activities

How to make your own Worm Farm!

It's easy to set up your own worm farm at school or at home. Just follow these steps:

1 You can set up your worms in a ready made plastic worm farm available from nurseries or hardware stores, or you can simply make one using storage containers or polystyrene boxes.

2 To make a polystyrene box worm farm, you will need two polystyrene boxes, one with a lid. Use one box as the base to collect the worm juice. Put some holes in the bottom of the second box, put mesh in the bottom of the box and place this box on top of the first box. The holes will allow worm juice to drain into the bottom box but the mesh will prevent the worms from crawling through. Put a few holes in the lid for aeration and place on top of the second box. The worm farm will need to be positioned in the shade.

3 Fill your worm farm about $\frac{3}{4}$ full with damp, torn newspaper. Add a handful of soil to your worm farm for grit to help the worms digest their food.

4 Add 500-1000 compost worms to your worm farm. Place them on top of the newspaper and they will crawl down into the layers of newspaper. Worms can often be purchased from hardware stores or ordered from a dealer. Council has a list of local dealers on its website.

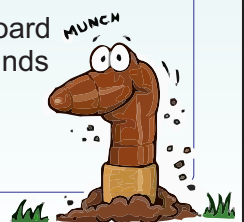
5 Add some food scraps to the bin and place some sheets of newspaper over the top of the pile to help keep it moist and to cover over the food. Make sure you don't overfeed your worms. Only place a handful of food scraps in to begin with and see how long it takes for the worms to break it down. This will give you an idea about how much to feed them. (Look at the worm menu!)

6 Keep an eye on your worms! Make sure that the worm farm doesn't dry out and keep adding food depending on how much the worms eat. Over a few weeks worm juice will begin to collect in the bottom of your worm farm. You can mix this with water to use as a liquid fertiliser for your plants. Over a few months, you will also see the worm castings build up in the worm farm.



Worm Menu

- ☐ Fruit and vegetable scraps
- ☐ Wet newspaper and cardboard
- ☐ Tea leaves and coffee grounds
- ☐ Egg shells
- ☐ Hair
- ☐ Cotton



Living sustainably in the Hawkesbury