

# CASTINGS

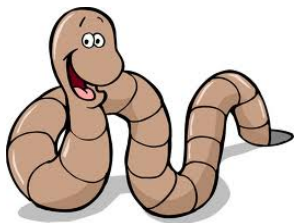
*Hello*, welcome to the end of another year. Are you all ready for the holidays? Well, remember your worms when you are getting ready to leave for the Christmas break. Below are some tips to make sure they will be okay without you for the holidays as well as a fun activity you can do. From all of us at REAPS and from your worms, Have a Merry Christmas and a very happy holiday season. We look forward to seeing you in the New Year.

## Get to know your worms

The holidays will soon be here. That means lots of tasty food and probably getting to meet new relatives or see ones you are already familiar with. But before you leave school why not get to know your worm buddies better?

The first step is to get some paper towel and place it on a surface that can get wet. Next spray the paper towel with your spray bottle until the paper towel is wet. Now it is time to go through your worm bin until you find some worms. Place the worms carefully on the paper towel.

Now you have a good look at your worm, what do you see? If there is a band (called a clitellum) near one end of the worm? That means your worm is an adult. If there is no band, than your worm is not fully mature yet, it is a teenager. Baby worms are very small and generally opaque (colour of a milk jug) in colour.



You can figure out which end is the worms head because the clitellum is nearest to the head or the way that worm moves.

Worms generally move in a forward direction, so if the worm is moving to the right its head is on the right end.

When you are watching the worm, observe how it moves, becomes short and fat or long and thin. Worms have no feet so they must rely on their muscle contractions to get anywhere.

## Tips for the Holidays

Here are some things you need to keep in mind before you go on holidays to make sure your worms stay happy and healthy.

- 1) Make sure that the bin is moister than usual, so it won't dry out.
- 2) Make sure that the worm bin is not in an area that is too hot or cold.
- 3) Fluff up the bedding very well, so the worms have more oxygen, as well as unplug the holes in the bottom.
- 4) Make sure that the bin is at least half-way full of moist bedding.
- 5) A few weeks before the holidays monitor the amount of food you are feeding the worms. Bury a little more than two weeks worth of food in the bedding.
- 6) **CHECK** the worms as soon as you get back. Make sure their bedding is moist, give them a good fluffing, and ensure they have food to eat.



Christmas tree worms, or *Spirobranchus giganteus*

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