

HELLO! Some worms have already started to migrate home and over the next month, the rest of the worms will be making their way back to REAPS demonstration garden. You'll have noticed that the bedding is all about gone and that the bin is full of castings again. If you have not had the opportunity to harvest your bin, please call and make arrangements with the Worm Lady. The finished castings will stay with your class for use as a growth medium. Here are a few ways to harvest the castings and some ideas about what to do with them when you are

HARVESTING

There are a few ways to harvest your compost. Each method has their ups and downs. Here are 2 simple methods that we recommend:

1. Worms do the sorting:
 - a. Move the contents of the bin over to one side.
 - b. Add new bedding to the empty side.
 - c. Bury the kitchen wastes in the new side. The worms will move to the new bedding in search of food.
 - d. Remove castings in 2 – 3 months and replace with new bedding.
 - e. Cover the new side with paper.
2. Hand Sorting: Is more time consuming but fun.
 - a. Separate by hand the worms from the castings; remember to take out the cocoons as well.
 - b. Empty the worms and castings on to a large plastic sheet.
 - c. Make pyramid shaped piles. Shine a bright light over the sheet.
 - d. Worms go to the bottom of the pile to avoid the light. Scoop castings away from the top and sides of the piles.
 - e. Place worms from bottom of piles into a container.
 - f. Save the castings for your garden and

Using Your Castings

Castings will provide nutrients to your plants and will help the soil hold moisture. It can be used in a number of different ways. It can be used as potting soil, top dressing, used for transplanting, and in seed rows when planting.

Castings have mucus that hardens around them when it is exposed to air. The hardened particles act to break up soils providing aeration and drainage, creating an organic soil conditioner as well as a natural fertilizer.

Potting Soil

- 1/3 Castings
- 2/3 Potting Soil



Gardens



- Dig/hoe in castings
- OR, Spread 2-5 cm on top of soil as top dressing

Lawn

- Aerate lawn then rake 2-5 cm of castings over top.



Mulch



- Place Castings around plants, trees and shrubs to conserve moisture and control weeds.



The Compost Demonstration Garden is now open for the summer until the end of October. Your class is invited to visit. Come and see the giant worm bin and all of the beautiful plants! Just call and arrange a time. Don't forget about our Annual Plant Sale on May 26th, from 10am—2pm. Hope to see you.

Answers from issue 102

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|----------|-----------|
| 1. False | 8. True |
| 2. False | 9. False |
| 3. False | 10. False |
| 4. True | 11. True |
| 5. False | 12. True |
| 6. False | 13. False |
| 7. True | |

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