

BUILDING YOUR TIGER WORMERY

Starting and maintaining
a healthy wormery



ASSEMBLY

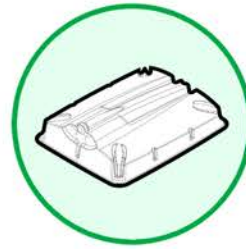
Before getting started, please check your delivery package against the checklists below to ensure it contains all the correct items.

Standard Tiger Wormery (3 or 4 Tray)

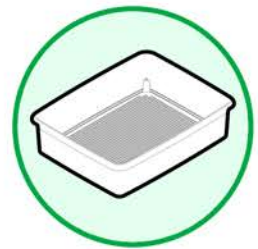
- 3 or 4 x Trays depending on which wormery you've chosen
- 1 x Drainage sump tray (with hole)
- 1 x Lid (looks identical to sump tray)
- 1 x Pack of lime mix
- 1 x Coir block
- 1 x Pouch of tiger worms or worm card voucher
- 1 x Filter Bag
- 1 x Wire frame for filter bag
- 4 x Legs
- 1 x Tap with nut & 2 washers

Deluxe Tiger Wormery (3 or 4 Tray)

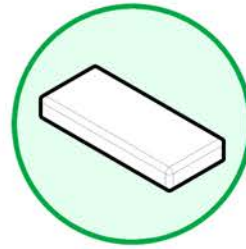
- 3 or 4 x Trays depending on which wormery you've chosen
- 1 x Drainage sump tray (with hole)
- 1 x Lid (looks identical to sump tray)
- 1 x Pack of lime mix
- 1 x Coir block
- 1 x pouch of tiger worms or worm card voucher
- 1 x Filter Bag
- 1 x Wire frame for filter bag
- 4 x Legs
- 1 x Tap with nut & 2 washers
- 1 x Pack of worm treats
- 1 x Coir moisture mat



LID/SUMP



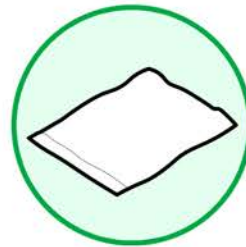
TRAYS



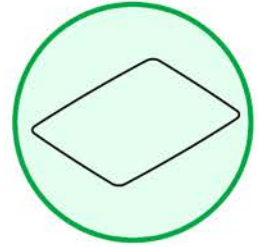
COIR BLOCK



LEGS X 4



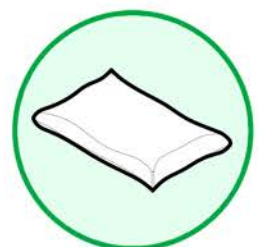
FILTER BAG



FILTER FRAME



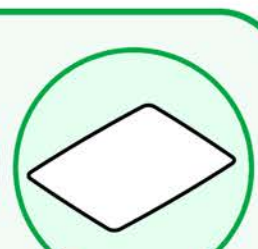
TAP & WASHERS



LIME MIX



WORM TREATS

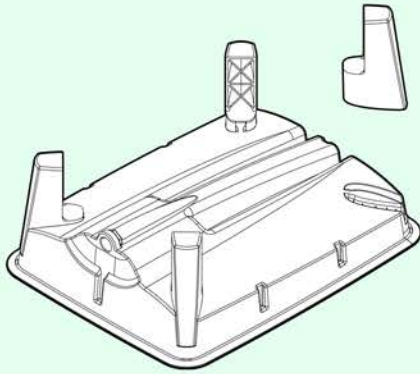


**COIR MOISTURE
MAT**

DELUXE ONLY

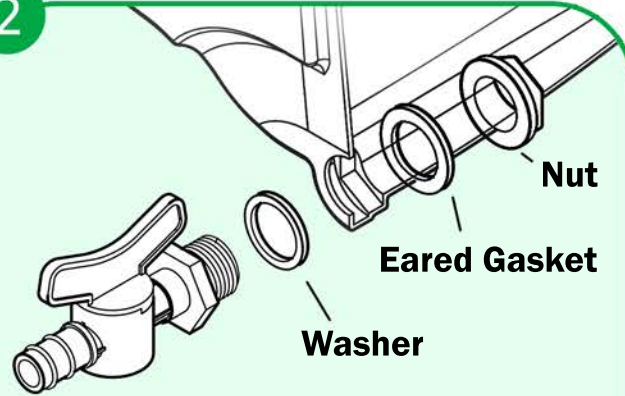
These items are only included with the deluxe wormery.

1



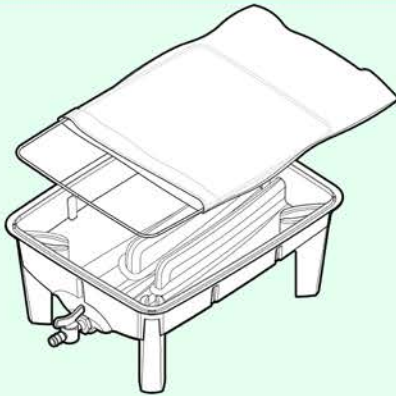
Press legs into sump tray.

2



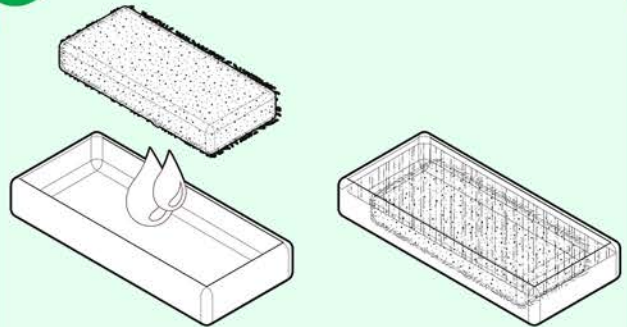
Attach tap washers and nut in order shown.

3



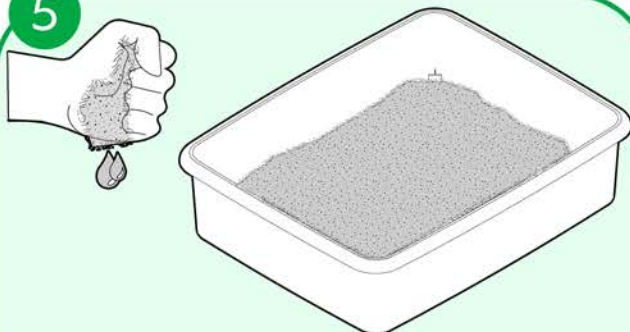
Slide the filter bag over the wire frame. Fold the flap of the bag over the end of the frame and place the assembly with flap facing down into sump.

4



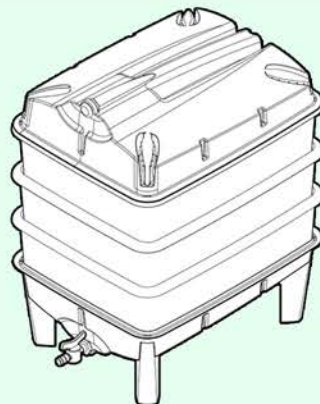
Place coir block in shallow container, fill container with water until block is half submerged. Allow to soak for 3 to 4 hours.

5



Drain off excess remaining water, take a handful of the soaked coir at a time and squeeze very hard to finally remove any excess remaining water. Place all coir in bottom tray, then spread the coir evenly over the inside of the tray.

6



Empty the worms in to the tray, then put 2 handfuls of rotting food waste into a corner. Pop the lid on and your wormery is ready!

EARLY DAYS

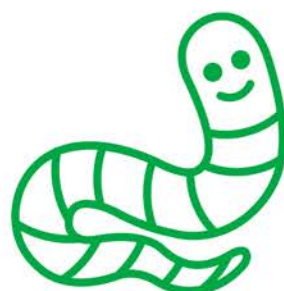
Once your Wormery is assembled, you should soak the coir block in water, place in a shallow container and add water about half way up it's side, this helps to make the block moist and soft without completely drenching it. Squeeze all excess water out of the coir and spread evenly over the bottom of the first tray.

Add 2 good handfuls of rotting food waste to a corner of your first working (bottom) tray, on top of the coir base. Empty the worms in to the middle of the tray then place the lid on top. You should wait around a week before adding further waste as the first few weeks are when the worms settle down and explore their new home and become mature.

The worms rely on the food decomposing (rotting) a certain amount first, so don't worry if the food is looking rotten and mouldy – your worms will love it! For the first few weeks add a couple of handfuls of waste every few days and increase over time thereafter.

Once established, your Wormery should cope with the average food waste output of a family of 3 or 4. The Tiger Wormery is an 'upward migration' based system, so once your first tray is full, place another empty tray on top and start adding your food waste to this tray, the worms will follow the food up into the next tray when they are ready.

Then you do the same again with your third tray and so on. By the time your third or fourth tray is full, the tray on the bottom should contain compost ready to harvest.



WHAT TO FEED YOUR WORMS

Your worms will eat any dead and decaying organic matter, including ordinary kitchen waste such as peelings, bread, cooked and uncooked scraps, tea bags and paper kitchen towels. In fact, virtually any organic kitchen waste can be used.

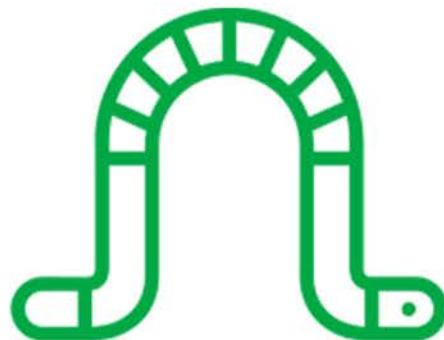
As most vegetable kitchen waste has a high-water content, no additional water should be added. Please note vegetable waste will be almost 85% water. Keep your food waste in a kitchen caddy for 3 to 5 days in your kitchen before adding it to the wormery. The type of food waste you have in your caddy will determine the amount of liquid which is given off from the rotting food. When your caddy is full put the contents and liquid into the wormery. Most of the liquid will drain through into the sump. This liquid is concentrated fertiliser. Too much water could lead to "waterlogging" of the waste, this in turn will allow the waste to compact and air will be excluded – remember that worms cannot live without air (see our quick tips section for advice on waterlogging).

Your Wormery is designed to deal with kitchen-generated organic food waste, however the odd handful of leaves, grass or similar garden waste may be used (avoid woody and thick fibrous material) from time to time, but infrequently.

Similarly don't use large quantities of garden material such as lawn clippings as this will be far too much waste at one time. Large quantities of garden waste are perhaps best dealt with by composting techniques involving conventional composters.

You can also use waste and litter from small herbivorous pets like rabbits and hamsters, but dog and cat faeces (poo), and indeed the waste of any meat-eating animals should not be added as they can carry diseases. Don't add too much onion, leek, or citrus fruit peel as this tends to make the environment too acidic. If these items are added, lime mix, as provided should be added each time you add them to help keep the compost 'sweet'.

The lime mix should certainly be added if you notice tiny cotton thread-like white worms appearing. These Pot worms or enchytraeids are natural and quite harmless however, they are an indicator that the compost is becoming too acidic (the ideal pH is neutral) and/or too wet. Add one small handful every 6 weeks or so in normal conditions.



LOOKING AFTER YOUR WORMERY

Conditions in each Wormery are bound to differ because of numerous variables such as type, frequency and state of food added, location of the Wormery and the temperature. No two Wormeries will have identical conditions. In view of this, operating a Wormery involves just a little bit of 'art' and some common sense.

Whilst it is true to say that the Wormery requires relatively little maintenance, its success is dependent upon the health of the worms. A short inspection on a regular basis should ensure that the worms stay on course. Every 4 weeks or so gently dig into the compost with a hand fork or stick to check that the worms are thriving, and that compost production is underway. Whilst doing this you will be able to check for any possible indications of excess moisture (waterlogging) or acidity.

Adding torn cardboard egg cartons or screwed up plain brown cardboard each month will help absorb any large quantity of liquid generated, it will reduce any excess dampness in the compost and create air pockets in the waste which will be beneficial to the worms.

If in doubt add a handful of lime mix as well. **BE SURE TO MIX THE CARDBOARD THOROUGHLY INTO THE FOOD WASTE.**

Draining off the liquid feed frequently also helps to prevent over-moist conditions. Worm composting is a simple, clean, and efficient natural process. A little bit of care and attention will ensure success. Although problems are few and unusual, they are simple to avoid and usually straightforward to remedy.

If conditions become less than ideal, your worms may slow down their processing of food waste and they will leave the food waste in the trays. If this occurs stop adding new food for one or two weeks to give the worms a chance to catch up, check the quick tips and troubleshooting section in this information booklet.

If you are in any doubt or have any queries concerning your Wormery please do not hesitate to call us - we are only too happy to assist. The timely resolution of any minor problem or difficulty should avoid the possibility of any more major problems or failure later.

HARVESTING YOUR KITCHEN WASTE LIQUID FEED

This is produced more quickly than the compost and you should be able to start tapping this off after about 3 to 4 weeks or earlier. Check for liquid every week. It is important not to allow liquid to stay in the sump, if you do and worms get into the sump they will drown.

We would advise you to check if the Wormery sump needs emptying every week - if this is required simply turn the tap forwards so the handle is in line with the body of the tap to fully open it. Store the liquid in a sealed plastic container. This excellent general-purpose liquid plant food has numerous uses for house and garden plants. Dilute the liquid with 10 parts of water to one part of liquid for your organic, liquid plant food.

Typically, the liquid feed is high in potassium and phosphorus, has a medium level of nitrogen and is rich in essential minerals and trace elements. Please note that the liquid feed can have a strong odour at the point of tapping off and diluting, however, any odour should dissipate rapidly upon dilution.

EMPTYING THE COMPOST

When your third or fourth tray is full, the first tray should be ready for harvesting, this will typically be 4 to 6 months on from when you first set up the system. The contents of the bottom tray will be a rich dark colour, if not black. If you have the compost in this condition before the 4 to 6 months has elapsed you can harvest the compost. Simply lift off the upper trays to access the bottom one, then remove it and harvest your compost.

The working trays are then placed on to the sump and you now have a spare tray ready to go on top of the stack when required. As most of the worms should be in the upper trays, you should not lose too many when the compost is spread on your garden.

However, if a few worms are added to the garden with the compost, they will not cause any harm whatsoever.

For professional looking results, the compost can be sieved through a 12mm sieve prior to use although this is not essential. Worm compost is rich, fertile, nutritious and contains many valuable trace elements, so use in handfuls rather than barrow loads. It makes excellent top dressing or can be used to make quality potting compost. It can also be used as a topping for house plants and garden tubs and is quite excellent for tomatoes and roses. Worm casts are one of the richest natural sources of balanced organic nutrients for horticultural use known to man, perhaps unsurprisingly it's known as 'the caviar of composts'.

TYPICAL COMPOST MIXTURE

Gardeners have their own preferences for the perfect compost mixture, and the ideal mix will vary according to your soil. The following formulae are typical (and for your guidance):

TOP DRESSING

Spread a 1 inch layer of worm compost as required around your plants



LAWN DRESSING

1-part sand 1-part soil 1 part worm compost



SEED COMPOST

3 parts leaf mould 1-part worm compost



POTTING COMPOST

2 parts leaf mould 1-part worm compost 1/2-part Perlite



CONTAINER COMPOST

4 parts leaf mould 2 parts worm compost 1-part sand or Perlite



PLANTING COMPOST

1-part soil 1-part worm compost (for transplanting)



QUICK TIPS

Once my Tiger Wormery has been assembled, how do I get it up and running?

Once your Tiger Wormery is assembled, add two large handfuls of rotting food waste to a corner of your first tray and place the lid on top. You should wait around a week before adding further waste as the first few weeks are when the worms settle down and explore their new home and become mature.

The worms rely on the food decomposing naturally a certain amount first, so don't worry if the food is looking rotten and mouldy. For the first few weeks add a couple of large handfuls of waste every few days and increase over time thereafter.

What can I put in my Wormery and what should I avoid?

You **CAN** put the following into a Wormery:

- Most cooked/uncooked food waste.
- The waste and bedding from herbivorous animals like rabbits and hamsters.

AVOID putting in:

- Acidic foods including fruits and peels from these fruits in quantity. If you do, be sure to add 2 or 3 handfuls of the lime and make sure you mix it into the waste food.
- Fish as it can get smelly quickly.
- Pet poo, nappies and flour.

Why Tiger worms?

Red wigglers (Tiger worms) are recommended by most vermicomposting experts, as they have some of the best appetites and breed very quickly. Other breeds of worm can be used, but they do not adapt as well to the shallow compost bin or work as hard as the tiger worms,

so the progress of your composting will be slower. Tiger worms typically live for between 6 months up to 2 years.

What is coir bedding?

Coir is formed using all the white and brown fibres from coconut husks, it is a versatile material which is a common choice for worm bedding, as well as for use in gardens.

What does a coir mat do and is it the same as a moisture mat? (Deluxe Wormery Only)

A coir mat, sometimes referred to as a coir moisture mat or moisture mat, keeps your compost warm and moist and will make it easier for the worms to find the surface and it encourages them upwards to where the food waste is. The mat should be placed on the food waste in the working tray. When that tray is full and another tray is started, place the mat on the food waste in the new working tray, they will eventually rot and be eaten by the worms.

What is the purpose of worm treats? (Deluxe Wormery Only)

If your Wormery gets too wet, the worm treats can be added to absorb any excess moisture. They can be processed by your worms and are wood-based pellets. A 1.5kg bag will give you about six months' supply and they can be added gradually.

What temperature is best?

Ideally the wormery should be kept out of direct sunlight, but also somewhere it can maintain a consistent temperature. In winter, it's best to keep the wormery indoors or at the very least somewhere insulated. Garages and sheds are popular locations due to their ability to keep the wormery dry.

What about holidays?

Leaving an established Wormery without further food for up to 4 weeks should be no problem. The worms regulate their activity in line with the amount of food available. Your holidays should not pose any difficulties for the worms. However, do remember to drain off all the liquid before you leave the Wormery, and mix in some dry shredded cardboard egg cartons or newspaper. Also leave the tap open with a container positioned to collect any excess liquid.

Will weeds start growing in the wormery?

This is unlikely but possible. The most likely cause is the addition of weeds with seed heads. In any event this is no problem. Simply pick out any seedlings to prevent further growth.

There's mould in my bin. Why?

In the early stages of decomposition of vegetable matter, a furry grey mould may occasionally appear. It is not unpleasant, will not affect the worms and will soon disappear.

Where should I keep my Wormery?

Wherever is most convenient for you, indoors or outside. In many ways, the kitchen is the most appropriate place, but this won't suit everyone. Wherever you do put it, keep it frost-free during the winter and out of direct rain. Perhaps an outhouse, garage, shed or utility room would be ideal for the colder months.

Does the temperature affect the process?

Yes, the optimum temperature range is 18–25°C but your hard-working tiger worms will work well at lower temperatures, although there may be a noticeable slow down below 10°C. Temperatures over 30°C are best avoided. Please note that in the first 8–10 weeks after setting up the Wormery, the worms are particularly vulnerable to extremes of temperature.

Can I add newspaper?

Yes, in normal operation adding several sheets of shredded newspaper or cardboard each week is fine. If your Wormery seems very damp, then add and mix in as much dry shredded newspaper/cardboard as is necessary to absorb the excess moisture. This may require a significant quantity of cardboard or newspaper.

Will the wormery smell?

No if you have followed the instructions this should not happen. However, if you use strong foods such as fish or some meat scraps it is advisable to bury them well or sprinkle a layer of soil, leaf mould, coir, or peat free compost to 'seal it in'. The occasional handful of lime mix also helps ensure that the process remains sweet.

How long does the process take?

The Wormery is quick and efficient. Within about 3 to 4 weeks, you'll be tapping off the liquid feed. A handful of kitchen waste takes 6–8 weeks to turn into compost. However, most people wait until the Wormery is nearly full before emptying the compost. As you are adding food all the time it typically takes 4 – 6 months, this will be controlled by the amount of food waste you put in the wormery. Remember over 75% of what goes in comes out as an excellent nutritious liquid plant food. Remember to dilute the liquid 10 parts water to one part liquid before using it on your plants.

Do the worms escape?

Once the Wormery is established, if the Wormery is looked after as described they have no reason to even try - it's a compost worm's paradise. However, during the first few days the worms will explore and it's during this period you may find the odd worm ends up outside the unit. Don't worry, losing the odd worm is not a problem, but if you find your worms are particularly adventurous try keeping the unit inside a black bag which will allow you to catch them and replace them back into the Wormery. Once they have

explored their new home they tend to stay well out of sight in the compost unless their environment becomes unpleasant.

The main reason worms try to escape is due to the contents of the Wormery being too wet and soggy. If the waste is too wet, it becomes compacted which forces all the air out of the waste. Please note that worms cannot survive without air which could also be a reason for them trying to escape.

As the worms settle, they explore which is perfectly normal. Losing a few worms is nothing to be particularly worried about, as there are enough worms supplied to continue breeding. Once the Wormery has been established and the worms have settled it provides them with their ideal environment and conditions. The worms are in an excellent and near-ideal environment inside a dark, cool Wormery.

Does the Wormery need any maintenance?

If you wish to clean the Wormery, use a damp cloth only and not any detergents or soaps. A wipe over with a damp cloth is all that is required to keep the unit looking good and won't harm the worms at all. If you use kitchen towel, then the towel itself can be added to the Wormery to become part of the composting process.

Can I store the liquid feed and compost?

Yes, the liquid can be tapped off into a suitable container (e.g., plastic milk bottles with screw tops) and stored in a cool dark location for several months prior to dilution and use. Similarly, the compost can be bagged up and stored for later use.

Where should I keep my worms until I'm ready to set up my Wormery?

You can store worms in the fridge once they arrive if you need some time to get your Wormery sorted. They'll also survive in the post as we put them in special bags.

Can I put worms from a compost bin into my Wormery?

If they are the small red wriggly worms rather than the mineral soil-dwelling earthworm, the simple answer is yes. That said, there should be no need to as we provide plenty to start with and they breed well in a Wormery.

What is the lime mix?

It's a gentle form of lime - calcium oxide and stops the wormery becoming too acidic. Simply add in moderation any time you decide to add acidic foods (citric fruit, onions, etc.) to your wormery.

Is the process safe?

Yes. Not only is it safe, but it's also totally environmentally friendly, interesting, and highly educational. Many youngsters delight in looking after the household Wormery and don't realise just how much they learn. Combine their interest in nature with their concern for the environment and you will get your kitchen waste bin emptied every time!

Will I need to buy more worms?

This is unlikely as the Wormery should provide ideal conditions for them to thrive and breed in.

My worms don't seem to be moving around a lot. What does this mean?

It's not unusual for worms to look like they're not moving around. Some people have been worried in the past that it's a sign they've died, but this is not usually the case. The worms are kept in a refrigerated environment until shipped in the protective packing. They are semi-dormant until they warm up. If you provide them with some food (rotting green vegetable leaves to start) they will soon be full of life.

Will I end up with too many worms in my Wormery?

No. Worms are clever with their breeding in that they will never overpopulate. They regulate their reproduction based on their environmental conditions, the space they have available and the food supply

Cleaning Filter Bag

After removing the bottom tray with the final compost in, this is a good opportunity to remove the filter bag which sits below the bottom tray and wash it clean. Remove the wire frame with the filter bag on it, turn it upside down and rinse with water, this will wash the nutrients deposited on the filter onto your garden where it will have a benefit as against washing it down your drain



TROUBLESHOOTING

The two most commonly encountered (but still quite rare) problems are described below:

Excess Moisture and Waterlogging

Wormeries should always be stored under a roof or in a secluded and sheltered area for best results as they're not rainproof and could flood in the event of heavy showers, but they are perfect for a garage, shed or out-building. Signs to watch out for include: any unpleasant odour in the Wormery or numerous worms that look like they're continually attempting to escape (after the first month or so of operation during which time some worm exploration is to be expected).

Both are generally signs of waterlogging in the compost trays. Forgetting to tap off the liquid feed can result in the sump filling up which also stops the flow of water from the waste, thus leaving the compost waterlogged and unpleasant. Your worms will not thrive under these conditions. If you are adding large quantities of water rich foods such as lettuce, cabbage, and fruit peelings, particularly in warmer weather, water may be rapidly released into the compost (see above). Similarly, if the contents of the bin have become too acidic (see section on lime mix) and the worms have failed to thrive, the reduced worm activity will slow the flow of nutrient rich liquid to the sump.

Worm composting is a moist (damp) process, however excessive moisture (wet and soggy) will deny oxygen to the worms and severely reduce their effectiveness. The worms will leave the food waste, you will either see them at the top of the Wormery or they will have gone into the sump where they may have drowned because of the liquid in the sump, to remedy this situation, simply tear cardboard egg cartons into large pieces and mix thoroughly into the compost.

Flies and Insects

The Tiger Wormery is designed to make access to flies and insects difficult. The fly most likely to take an interest in your Wormery is the small fruit fly (*drosophila*). A little care in operation should help reduce the likelihood of such trouble.

The risks to be aware of are:

- Adding garden soil or compost which is not sterile and may contain insects or their eggs.
- Adding waste from home grown vegetables which may have eggs or larvae on their leaves.
- Storing your kitchen waste too long or in an open container before adding to the Wormery - flies may have laid eggs on waste and then you inadvertently introduce them to the wormery.
- Leaving the lid off or not replacing it securely.

Flies won't do any harm but may well be considered unpleasant or undesirable, and particularly unacceptable if you keep your Wormery indoors! Should you experience a minor fly problem simply cover the surface of the food waste in the bin with a two-inch layer of well-rotted compost, leaf mould, peat free compost or coir and don't add further food for 6 to 7 days - this should rapidly cure the problem. This process is called 'casing' the bin.

In the unusual event of a serious insect infestation, it is likely that insects have started to breed in the Wormery. Fly paper or a sticky fly trap may well resolve this problem. Alternatively, spray the bin for 8 or 9 consecutive days to break an established insect breeding cycle. We don't like recommending chemical insecticides as they're not organic, however they shouldn't harm the worms (as they will be below the surface).



All Rights Reserved. No unauthorised copying or reproduction without the written consent of The GM8 Group.



<https://www.gm8group.com/>



CS@gm8group.com



+44 (0)1462 429765



54 Wilbury Way, Hitchin,
Hertfordshire, United Kingdom,
SG4 0TP