



Full Instructions and Information

We advise you read these instructions fully and keep this leaflet for future reference

Congratulations on purchasing our innovative Junior or Midi Wormery. You are now on your way to producing some nutrient rich vermicompost and liquid feed. The wormery is a specially designed worm compost bin which will not only give you many years of excellent service but is a fascinating and environmentally friendly composting process. With only a small amount of care and attention you can successfully achieve great compost time and time again.

What's included in your wormery

- Separating Tray with Polystyrene Leg
- Tap with Washer and Nut
- Bag of Tiger Worms or Worm Card Voucher
- Coir Block Bedding
- Lime Mix

Putting your wormery together

1. Empty the wormery of its contents.
2. In a separate bowl (a washing up bowl works well) place the coir block and gradually add water until the coir expands and is damp to touch. (If needed squeeze any extra moisture out before placing in the Wormery)
3. Assemble the tap. With the washer on the outside, place the tap in the hole and tighten firmly with the nut on the inside.
4. Insert the polystyrene block into the separating tray and with the block facing down, place into the Wormery.
5. Place a single sheet of newspaper on top of the separator tray.
6. The Wormery is now ready for the coir bedding, Add enough for the worms to be able to burrow.
7. Carefully empty the bag of worms on top of the coir bedding.
8. Add a handful of food waste into the Wormery. (This is best placed against the wall of the Wormery)
9. Place the lid on the Wormery and ensure the clips are securely clipped down. You're now all set up and on your way to producing some fantastic compost.

Early Days

Once your Wormery is all set up and you have placed your first handful of food waste in, do not add any further food for a week. The worms will take a little while to settle into their new environment and you may find some climbing up the sides, which is normal while they explore their new home. After a week, check on the Wormery and check to see how much of the food waste has been digested. Apart from in colder temperatures, the worms should be reasonably active by now. Worms rely on the food decomposing slightly, so do not worry if the food is looking rotten, the worms will love it! For the first 2-3 months you only want to add 1-2 handfuls of food waste a week as the worms can take up to 3 months to mature and start breeding. After this time your Wormery should be well established and capable of dealing with most of your kitchen waste (typically the output of 1-2 persons). It is good practice to turn the compost every now and then to keep a good airflow within the Wormery.

What to feed your worms

Your worms will eat any dead and decaying kitchen waste such as peelings, bread, cooked and uncooked scraps, broken up egg shells, tea, coffee grounds and even paper kitchen towels. In fact, virtually any organic kitchen waste can be used within your Wormery. Be aware, fruit and vegetable scraps have a high water content (around 85%), so no additional water should be added to your Wormery. Keep an eye on your Wormery to ensure it doesn't get waterlogged, as this will compact the compost and restrict the airflow within the Wormery, causing the worms to leave or perish as they cannot survive without air.

Essentially, your Wormery is designed to deal with kitchen generated 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.



You can also add waste and litter from small vegetarian pets like rabbits and hamsters, but dog and cat faeces or faeces from any meat-eating animal should not be used within this Wormery, as they can carry diseases and the finished product would not be able to be used on growing fruit/vegetables or where children play. If you are looking at composting pet poo, please visit www.originalorganics.co.uk where you can find our range and more information on Pet Poo Wormeries.

You do not want to add too much onion, leek or citrus fruit peel into your Wormery either, as this can make the environment of your Wormery too acidic. When these items are added you should add a small handful of the lime mix provided (or broken eggs shell if you do not have any lime mix left) to help keep the pH levels neutral. Lime mix should also be added if you notice any tiny cotton thread-like white worms appearing, although harmless, these are an indicator that the Wormery is too acidic. In normal conditions, if you add a small handful every 4-6 weeks, this should keep your Wormery 'sweet', and hopefully avoid these type of issues.

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, and the conditions they are in. A short inspection on a regular basis should ensure that the worms stay on course. We recommend every 4 weeks or so to gently dig into the compost with a hand-held garden fork to check that the worms are thriving, and that the compost production is underway. This process helps to check for any possible indications of excess moisture. This also helps aerate the wormery, which will help the worms to thrive. Adding several sheets of dry shredded newspaper, broken egg carton boxes or shredded kitchen/loo roll tubes each month will help process the large quantity of liquid generated by the fruit/vegetable scrapes and reduce any excess dampness in the compost. Draining off the liquid feed frequently also helps to prevent over-moist conditions. Worm composting is a simple, clean and effective natural process. A little bit of care and attention will ensure great success.

Harvesting your Kitchen Waste

Liquid Feed

This is produced more quickly than the compost and you should be able to start tapping this off around 6-8 weeks. It is important not to allow the liquid level to become too high, and it is advised to check this every week. Once liquid is being produced, it is best to empty the Wormery sump every couple of weeks or so by using the tap. (TURN IT 180 DEGREES FROM RIGHT TO LEFT TO FULLY OPEN.) If necessary, carefully tip forward for more liquid feed. If you keep your Wormery outside place it on a few bricks to give easy access to the tap. This excellent plant food has numerous uses for house and garden plants. Dilute 1 part liquid with 10 parts water for your liquid plant food. Typically, the liquid feed is high in the major plant nutrients - potassium and phosphorus and has a medium level of nitrogen which is rich in essential minerals and trace elements.

Emptying the compost

When your bin is full (typically 8-10 months) it is time to empty the Wormery of its rich vermicompost.

Obviously, you will need to keep as many of the worms as you can to start the bin again and this is simply done by transferring the top 3" or 4" inches of waste into a suitable container or onto a Wormery separator sheet (you can purchase a separator sheet from our website - www.originalorganics.co.uk). After emptying the compost, return this top layer back to the Wormery and off you go again. If a few worms are added to the garden with the compost, not to worry as they will not cause any harm whatsoever.

As so much liquid drains through the upper layers on its way to the sump the resultant compost tends to be moist. If you prefer a drier material, simply spread it out on some newspaper or sheet in a dry place for a few days and any excess dampness should soon evaporate.

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 is quite excellent for tomatoes and roses. Worm casts are one of the richest natural sources of balanced nutrients for horticultural use known to man. Perhaps not surprisingly it's known as "the caviar of compost".

Typical Compost Mixtures

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

Top dressing:	Spread a 1" 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 leafmould 1 part worm compost
Potting compost:	2 parts leafmould 1 part worm compost 1/2 part Perlite
Container compost:	4 parts leafmould 2 parts worm compost 1 part sand or Perlite
Planting compost:	1 part soil 1 part worm compost (for transplanting)





FACT FILE

Q: What is Vermicompost

A: Vermicompost is a composting process using various species of worms, usually red wigglers (Tiger worms) white worms, and other earthworms, to create a mixture of decomposing vegetable or food waste, bedding materials, and vermicast (also called worm castings, worm humus, worm manure, or worm faeces). The end process of vermicompost contains a nutrient-rich fertilizer and soil conditioner and also improves the moisture holding capacity of the soil.

Q: Where should I keep my Wormery?

A: The great thing about the Junior and Midi Wormery is that it can be kept both inside and out, so wherever is most convenient for you. In many ways, the kitchen is the most appropriate place, however this does not suit everybody. Wherever you decide to keep your wormery, keep it frost free during the winter. An outhouse, garage, shed or utility room would be the ideal place to store this in the colder months. If stored outside, it is best placed in a shaded area in high temperatures.

Q: Why tiger Worms?

A: Red wigglers (Tiger worms) are recommended by most vermicomposting experts, as they have some of the best appetites and breed very quickly. Unlike common earthworms which are great burrowers, tiger worms tend to congregate towards the surface where they feed just below the top layer of food waste. Other breeds of worm can be used, but they do not adapt as well to the shallow compost bin or work as hard, so the end result will take longer.

Q: My worms have arrived and seem sluggish/ unresponsive, are they ok?

A: 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 some food (Green leaves are good to start) they will soon be full of life.

Q: My worms are trying to escape, what is causing this?

A: The main reason worms try to escape is due to the contents of the wormery being too wet. If the waste is too wet, it becomes compacted which forces all the air out of the waste. Worms cannot survive without air, so they will most likely climb up or burrow down to escape this. You need to keep the compost in your wormery just damp to the touch. If it does become too wet, mix in some broken up egg cartons or toilet/kitchen tubes, which will help soak up any extra moisture. The other reason they may leave is due to the wormery being too acidic. If you add onions and citrus fruits, make sure you mix in a handful of lime mix to help balance the PH (eggs shells work the same, if you have no lime mix)

Q: How long does it take for Worms to breed?

A: It can take two to three months for a Red Wiggler (Tiger worm) to mature. Once they have matured, they can produce two to three cocoons per week. Each cocoon averages three hatchlings. Cocoons take up to 11 weeks to mature and hatch.

Q: What is the Coir Block used for?

A: This coir is perfect to use as bedding in a wormery to help make nutrient rich vermicompost. Just gradually add water until the coir is damp to the touch (Squeeze any extra moisture out before adding to your wormery). Coconut Coir is extracted from the husk on the outer shell of a coconut, because of its superior water holding capacity, excellent air space and drainage, coir is a useful soil amendment for wormery bedding as well as potted plants, containers and within the garden.

Q: What are Pelletised Worm Treats? (This is a supplementary item that can be purchased via our website)

A: Made from 100% sustainably resourced and non-contaminated wood waste, known as 'Ecowood' they rapidly absorb excess moisture, swell up and are then processed by the worms. A handful or two can be mixed into your wormery, if it gets too wet. You can also mix a handful every 3 or 4 weeks which will help ensure your Wormery stays sweet, well balanced and working at its best.

Q: What is the Coir Mat for? (This is a supplementary item that can be purchased via our website)

A: The Coir Mat is to be placed on the surface of the food waste. Adding the Coir Moisture Mat keeps your compost warm and moist and will make it easier for the worms to find the surface and encourage them upwards to where the food waste is. This will eventually degrade and be eaten by the worms.

Q: What is the Lime Mix for?

A: Essentially it is a gentle form of calcium which reduces the acidity in the wormery. Most food waste is mildly acidic and worms thrive best at a neutral pH(7). A small handful handed every 4-6 weeks will keep the Wormery conditions sweet (Crushed eggshells are a great alternative to Lime Mix if you run out).

Q: What happens if I go on holiday?

A: Once your wormery is well established, your Wormery will be fine left for around 4 weeks. The worms regulate their activity in line with the amount of food available, so just top up your wormery with food waste before you go and enjoy your holiday. You should also tap of any liquid before you go and leave the tap open with a container underneath to stop the build up of liquid feed whilst your away.

Q: Does the temperature affect the process?

A: Yes, the optimum temperature range is 18-25°C but your hard-working worms will work well at lower temperatures, although there may be a noticeable 'go slow' below 10°C. Temperatures over 30°C are best avoided. In the first 8-10 weeks after setting up the Wormery, the worms are particularly vulnerable to extremes of temperature. Once established, the growing volume of compost gives some protection and insulation. If stored outside, it is best to locate your Wormery in a shaded place out of direct sunlight in Summer. In winter it is best to keep the Wormery in a frost free location.

Q: Will my wormery get flies?

A: The Junior/Midi Wormery is designed to deny access to flies and insects. The lid seal and clips should ensure a secure fit and the aeration vent on the lid is too fine for insects to get through. The fly most likely to take an interest in your Wormery is the small fruit fly. Simple care in operation should ensure that you have no such trouble. The risks to be aware of are:

1. Adding garden soil or compost which is not sterile
2. Adding garden or kitchen waste from home grown vegetables which may have eggs or larvae on their leaves
3. Storing your kitchen waste too long before adding to the Wormery - flies may have laid eggs on such waste and then you inadvertently introduce them to the worm bin
4. Not closing the lid securely.

Flies won't do any harm to the worms but may well be unpleasant particularly if you keep your Wormery indoors!

Should you experience a minor fly problem, depending on how rotted the food waste is, you can simply cover the surface of the food waste in the bin with a 2" layer of peat free compost or coir and do not add further food for 6-7 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, so you will need to get rid of as much food waste as possible in the Wormery and complete the same process as above. If this still doesn't cure the infestation as a last resort, you can use an organic pesticide that shouldn't harm the worms (as they will be below the surface).

Customer Service

We are committed to providing quality products that are good value and work well.

If you experience any problems, have an queries or comments concerning your Wormery, please feel free to contact us.



Email: cs@gm8group.com

Telephone: 01462 429765

Write to Us: 54 Wilbury, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG4 0TP



www.originalorganics.co.uk
Telephone: 01462 429777



www.wormery.co.uk
Telephone: 01462 429737



www.rainwatersolutions.co.uk
Telephone: 01462 429758



www.waterbuttsdirect.co.uk
Telephone: 01462 341161



www.originalorganics.ie
Telephone: +353 766 805247