What to Feed Worms in a Worm Bin

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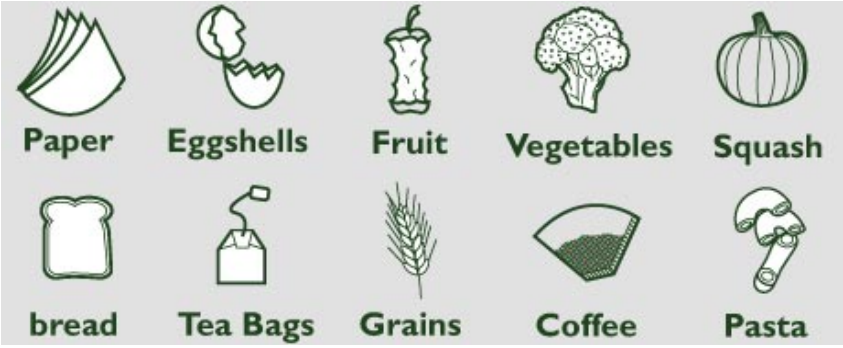
When feeding worms, it is important to remember a few key tips:

1. The smaller the better. Smaller pieces of food will break down faster, thus speeding up the composting process. Chopping large chunks of food to feed worms is recommended but not necessary. You can puree, freeze, or microwave food scraps before adding them to your worm composter to help break down material. Make sure that food has returned to room temperature before adding it to your worm bin.

2. The frequency and volume that you feed worms will depend on you and your family. You can add new food to the feeding tray at any time. Worms can eat up to half their weight in food per day in a fully established, well managed vermicomposter. Make sure that worms are actively engaged in eating the food you added most recently in the top feeding tray before adding more food. If they are not, this is a sign of overfeeding. On average, most people can fill a tray in about one month. It may take shorter or longer than that depending on how much kitchen waste you generate.

Make sure your worms are engaged with the last food you added before adding more.

What to feed worms in a worm bin:



When you feed worms **always** try to add equal portions of greens and browns!

Greens: Vegetable and fruit scraps, bread, pasta, coffee grounds and filters, teabags, dead plant matter from houseplants

Browns: Paper, junk mail, paper egg cartons, cardboard, dry leaves

All organic material will break down, some faster than others; however, there are some suggested foods to **avoid**:

Salty foods, citrus, spicy foods, oils (like those found in salad dressing), prepackaged foods with preservatives, meat and dairy products because they attract flies and can cause the vermicomposter to smell.

The Difference between BROWNS and GREENS as compost ingredients

This is a popular question among many first composters or organic gardeners. Regardless of the name, “Browns” and “Greens” are not differences in physical color. It is more technical than that. These terms are functions of the C:N (Carbon to Nitrogen) ratios in all once living creatures, plant or animal.

Browns and greens are nicknames for different types of organic matter to use in composting.

Browns to feed worms in a worm bin

Greens to feed worms in a worm bin

Browns are high in **carbon or carbohydrates**, thus they are organic carbon sources. These foods supply the energy that most soil organisms need to survive. Carbons also help absorb the offensive odors and capture and help prevent most of the organic nitrogen in the piles from escaping by evaporation or leaching. Carbons are also essential in the faster formation of humus from the organic matter in a composting process.

Greens are high in **nitrogen or protein**, thus organic nitrogen sources. These products help the composting microherd to grow, breed, and multiply fast in the piles, thus creating extreme internal temperatures in hot compost piles.

A simple test to determine if your organic matter is a “green” or a “brown” is to wet it, and wait a few days. If it stinks, it is definitely a green. If not, it’s a brown.