



THE TROUBLE WITH WORMS...



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Green Teams supporters are always stressing that "we are not experts; we are learning too". To prove this here's how my wormery got off to an inexperienced start.

A wormery is good for disposing of kitchen scraps, cooked and raw and, where there is little or no garden rubbish, can be used instead of a compost Bin. (But it won't take grass or leaves).



Apparently some offices have them just to dispose of lunch waste and tea bags. I got mine to supplement the three compost bins and to keep more biodegradable rubbish out of landfill (also because it sounded like a quirky idea). Mine's called a "Can-o-Worms" (CoW) and looks like a black tub in four layers. In 6-12 months, when it's up and running, there should be a rich, concentrated liquid feed in the sump at the bottom, an excellent grade of compost in the bottom tray and worms munching happily in the middle tray, working their way ever upwards towards the fresher food at the top. When the compost is harvested the empty tray will be replaced on the top for fresh food and so the trays will be rotated. Simple. No problem.



I ordered my CoW on line and it arrived early the next day, along with THE WORMS (approx 1000 of them). The white, woven, oddly smelling plastic sack felt heavy and saggy and moved gently in my hands. Curious to know what my new pets were like, I released the writhing pink knot into a bucket of the compost (also supplied as part of the kit.) Some worms were sewn into the bag seams so I freed those too, covered the bucket in clingfilm and left it in the utility room. Worms are light-sensitive, so they quickly burrowed out of sight. Great.

Later that evening I took the CoW equipment to the Green Teams meeting to demonstrate this wonderful system to other green enthusiasts. I intended to transfer the worms into their new home as soon as I got back.....

While I was at the meeting it became DARK. The worms, or 100 or more of the more adventurous ones anyway, made a bolt for it. When I switched on the light it was worse than I feared. There were worms high on the walls and dripping to the floor. They had stretched like long pieces of pink string and squeezed into gaps along the skirting and under the windowsill. They were under the



washing machine and pointy little tails (or heads?) were poking out from the corners of boxes. I don't mind worms, but at 11pm as I counted number 50 into my bucket and wondered if I'd need a ladder and a long stick to reach the rest, I began to think they deserved to die.



They are all in the wormery now, as far as I know. I hope they are happy and that as the weather gets warmer they will grow and multiply. Soon I hope to add the next two trays.

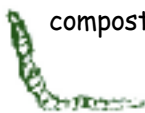
Is it worth it? Hard to say as yet, but I have learnt some valuable lessons already:

- shop around. There are cheaper wormeries than CoW which had come from Australia, which doesn't seem very environmentally sound. (you can buy British.)

- Put your worms straight into the wormery and never ever, ever leave the lid off after dark!

This information was provided by Green Teams Supporter Penny Bateman in April 2007. We are happy to add that in June 2007 Penny sent the following update:

The worm family is thriving and venturing into its second wormery layer. No more escapees as far as I can tell. I now have 500ml. of liquid plant food but as for usable compost, we might have to wait a while.....



The Green Teams would be interested to hear from anyone else with WORMERY experience. Is this a practical way to keep food waste out of landfill??? Or is it a big hassle for very small returns ??? please contact Carol on 01206 263670 or cls.dev@lineone.net.