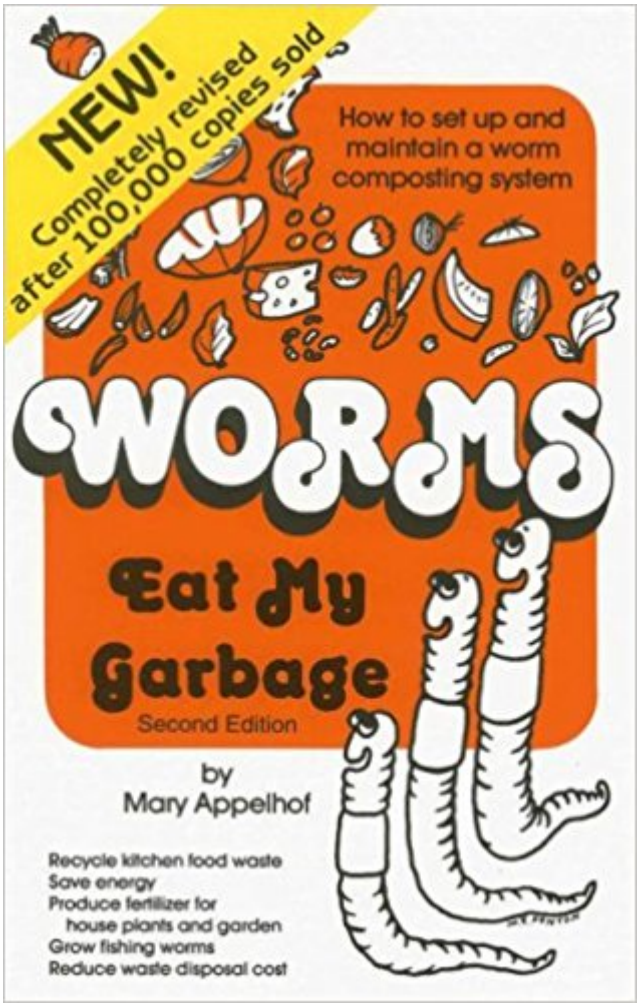
Worms Eat My Garbage: How To Set Up And Maintain A Worm Composting System



Synopsis

A new edition of the definitive guide to vermicomposting--a process using redworms to recycle human food waste into nutrient-rich fertilizer for plants. Author Mary Appelhof provides complete illustrated instructions on setting up and maintaining small-scale worm composting systems. Internationally recognized as an authority on vermicomposting, Appelhof has worked with worms for over three decades. Topics include: bin types, worm species, reproduction, care and feeding of worms, harvesting, and how to make the finished product of potting soil.

Book Information

Paperback: 162 pages

Publisher: Flower Press; Revised and expanded second edition edition (October 6, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0977804518

ISBN-13: 978-0977804511

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.4 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.8 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 206 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #37,354 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #6 inÂ Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Gardening & Landscape Design > By Technique > Urban #9 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > Science Studies > Nature > Gardening #17 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > Science Studies > Biology

Customer Reviews

"... people ... will thank [Appelhof] for showing us ... how we can eat better food by growing gardens with wormpower."--Pete Seeger, folksinger, environmental activist "You might say that Kalamazoo has become the epicenter of vermiculture (a fancy name for worm composting) ..."--Anne Raver, The New York Times "[This book] supplies everything you want to know about worm composting but didn't know where to ask."--Green Living Magazine -This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Mary Appelhof was recognized as an international authority and lecturer on small-scale vermicomposting. As owner of Flowerfield Enterprises and Flower Press, she dedicated over 20 years to the research, development, and marketing of products related to the earthworm, such as the Worm-a-way worm bin for which she held both Canadian and USA patents. Mary received many

honors including a National Science Foundation grant, was an invited speaker at the Global Assembly of Women and the Environment, and received special merit recognition as one of Renew America’s Environmental Success Stories. Mary also coordinated the international research conference workshop on the Role of Earthworms in the Stablization of Organic Residues and compiled its proceedings. An award-winning photographer, she held master’s degrees in education and biological sciences, and taught high school biology. Mary passed away in 2005.Â

This is a cute and eccentric, rather dated, oddly organized, and not very scientific guide to vermicomposting. It’s fine on the basics of keeping a worm composter, but much of its advice is easy to misunderstand or understand incompletely due to the lack of good pictures and hands-on, detailed description of specific scenarios. On some issues it is simply wrong. If you really want to understand your worms and the compost ecosystem you’re creating for them, you’ll be better off reading multiple online sources devoted to vermicomposting and talking with people who do it."Worms Eat My Garbage," like many guides, provides fine advice as far as it goes; it just doesn’t explain much about *why* you should do this or not do that. It also fails to put the key issues front and center for people new to worm and compost care: how the worms will behave in your vermicomposter if they are healthy or unhealthy, what they need or like and don’t like in their environment and diet, how to understand what you see, and the main ways you can screw up.I don’t believe the book ever points out that worms live on *microbes* in decomposing organic matter, and they only eat your "garbage" in the process of getting at microbes. Explaining the chemistry of composting and decomposition processes (aerobic and anaerobic) would be really helpful, but that’s not really covered here either. For example, nitrogen and sugars or starches can break down into wet, potentially toxic byproducts like ammonia and alcohols, which are not good for worms in quantity, especially if the worms can’t get away from them. How pH/acidity levels rise and fall is a related concern you won’t learn much about from this book.Here is an example that is typical of the book’s main flaw. There is a rambling discussion about how worms may not like something in lemon rinds or orange rinds, or citrus fruits in general. The author talks about a kid who wrote to her about this, explaining how limonene works, apparently based on experiments or expertise of a parent who may or may not have worked at a laboratory. Wouldn’t you rather have some hard science and real sources about the relative toxicity of limonene and acidity in your compost, what fruits have it in quantity, and so on? Instead you just get this long anecdote that shows the author does not understand the chemistry and can’t tell you definitely how to handle certain fruits in your compost based on an actual known risk. You will find other sources online that say citrus is fine, including

lemon and orange peels, but some worms dislike their acidity, as well as other food, like onions, that is acidic. Worms will only eat things they don't like when there is nothing else to eat or the disagreeable food is decomposed enough to be full of microbial life and attractive to worms. I am not sure what the 100% correct view is on this subject, but it's clear "Worms Eat My Garbage" provides more opinion and anecdote than science.Some things I've read in this book and others like it are confusing because they're presented as rules to follow but are contradicted later, or by other sources. For example, "Worms Eat My Garbage" advises blending up and microwaving your food waste before adding it to the vermicompost, but it doesn't explain the pros and cons, especially if your bin doesn't allow much airflow. Breaking down the food before adding it to the bin can actually help offset the potential problems of foods worms like less, especially if you let the blended mush dry out and get moldy before you add it to your worm bin. In "Worms Eat My Garbage" there's no explanation like this, and no warning about how too much finely chopped food waste -- especially if it's wet -- can also create a sludge the worms can't enter. Too much dense sludge will result in anaerobic decomposition as well, creating a stinky mess and leachate that may be toxic to worms and houseplants. The importance of surface area, air flow, and loose solids should have been emphasized to offset the idea that you should put a lot of "compost smoothie" in your bin.What you're dealing with are many variables in a dynamic system, so it's really not a matter of "don't ever do this" or "always do this" -- it's "do A if you also B this under these other conditions C and D, but look out for E and F happening." I don't mean to make it sound like vermicompost is a very delicate system but that it's much more educational and fun to understand as a variable and dynamic system that provides certain feedback you can understand and respond to as conditions change."Worms Eat my Garbage" is, like many worm guides, insufficient on the subject of proteins in a similar way it mishandles acidity and citrus. Meats, eggs and dairy, raw grains and processed grains or breads are generally not wanted in compost due to the odors, flies and critters they can attract. Nevertheless, these foods will break down and be enjoyed by worms, so with sufficient care in a well-sealed (or basement/garage) composter you can add them if you take care to understand what you are doing and maintain appropriate moisture and airflow levels. "Worms Eat My Garbage" says small amounts of meat are OK but should probably warn the reader that meat is generally a bad thing to add to compost due to the smell and leachate meats will produce and the creatures it may attract, especially outdoors. On the other hand, dairy and grains can work fine--a subject not covered in this book. Wet, spent (brewing) grains or breads are a special case, as adding a thick pile of them may cause anaerobic decomposition that creates alcohols and ammonia. Yet grain can work out fine if it's not overdone in a well-drained and aerated composter.This level of detail is

entirely lacking in "Worms Eat My Garbage." If you want more than dos and don’ts, if you want to experiment and explore or learn the science of worms and decomposition, this book won’t satisfy you.

Mary Appelhof’s book is both amusing and educational. This is the "Vermi Bible" for most people who compost their household waste with worms (vermicomposting). This 2nd edition includes description and discussion on commercially-available vermicomposting bins. Unfortunately, with the excitement and growing interest in worm composting, there are bins now available that are not reviewed in the book. (I guess we’ll need a 3rd Edition!) For the beginner as well as the worm hobbyist, I recommend this book highly.

This was/is an awesome book. In combo, there is nothing more you would need upon purchasing a worm farm. From a complete novice to the beginning agriscientist, soil science student, etc. this book is a great jumping off point. The only other useful information out side of this book has not been published into a more advanced study quite yet, although I’m sure it will come, this is your best bet for now. Great product!!

I enjoyed reading this book and felt that the book provided a good basic foundation on starting the worm composting. The only reservation I have in recommending this book with 5 starts is the published date. It was written awhile back and with the new composting options, it would have been nice to have the information on different composting bins and the pros and cons of the current systems. This book was recommended with the Worm Factory. I bought the Worm Factory and I am waiting to see the results after 3 months before posting my review but since the book is fairly old in its creation, there wasn’t a worm factory product at the time and therefore no mention of the pros and cons of using the system.

Just what I expected, a good, simple guide to how to worm compost. It got me excited and motivated. Worms are on the way!

Worms Eat My Garbage is a great book. It’s simple enough for your run-of-the-mill recycling/gardening geek like me to understand but the author goes out of her way to teach the proper scientific terminology of both the animals and the processes that will occur in your worm composting bins, so there’s something in there for science geeks as well.I had setup my worm bins

prior to reading the book and couldn't understand why I was losing worms, attracting flies, and getting a rancid smell coming off my bins. In just a few short hours this book taught he how to properly setup my vermicompost operation in a way that's healthy to me, the worms, and my home. They're now eating my garbage, reproducing at a rate that leaves me with plenty of worms for fishing, and there's nothing stinky or offensive about it.

I got into worm composting on a bet with my husband that I could find a method faster than a huge rotating barrel that my husband would only empty once a season. Quite informative and light reading for the first timer getting into worm composting. And, I won the bet. It also helps eliminates considerable weight entering into the trash while producing great compost. It's a great long term project for kids, just like having pets that need feeding and minimal care.

I fun, easy read, you can blow through it in an afternoon. There are lots of tips and tricks that you will find useful if you take up the modern craze of "worm farming." I'm a bit of a geek and have a deep need to know why. This book fails to satisfy in that department. If you are looking for a very accessible, easy to read guide to gettingÃ¢Â Â‹ you started quickly without any technical details, then this is the book for you.

of the Eastern and Central United States and Canada (Wormsloe Foundation Nature Book Ser.) The Fender Stratocaster Handbook, 2nd Edition: How To Buy, Maintain, Set Up, Troubleshoot, and Modify Your Strat Yucky Worms: Read and Wonder 100 Backyard Activities That Are the Dirtiest, Coolest, Creepy-Crawliest Ever!: Become an Expert on Bugs, Beetles, Worms, Frogs, Snakes, Birds, Plants and More The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller Riddled with Life: Friendly Worms, Ladybug Sex, and the Parasites That Make Us Who We Are Modeling Clay with 3 Basic Shapes: Model More than 40 Animals with Teardrops, Balls, and Worms