**Wigging Worms**

**Worm Bin**

A worm bin is a fun and easy way to watch worms “recycle” food waste. Here’s how to set up and keep a worm bin:

1. **Order worms.** Order red worms from a worm farm in your area or buy them from a bait shop. Be sure to ask for “red wigglers.” (Native earthworms will not thrive in a worm bin. Do not release red worms into the environment. They are an invasive species.)
2. **Choose a container.** You may use a plastic tub with a lid, a wooden bin, or other container. A good size for a classroom is a 5- to 10-gallon container, or one approximately 24” x 18” x 8”. It should be no more than 18” deep.
3. **Prepare the container.** Rinse out the container before using it. Drill holes in the bottom of it and on the sides to allow for air flow and drainage. Cover it with a loose-fitting lid. Place a tray underneath it to catch moisture. Fill the bin about three-quarters full with moistened bedding. Excess moisture can suffocate the worms. Add moistened bedding as needed to keep the bin three-quarters full. Add a handful of soil. You may also want to add other materials to the bed such as shredded newspaper or office paper, dry leaves, straw, or sawdust. You may need to remove the lid periodically to moderate moisture. A handful of soil is a good idea to add to the top of the bin from time to time. You may also want to have another container of bedding ready to fill the bin when the existing bedding becomes too wet. The bedding should be as wet as a squeezed-out sponge and no wetter. Add a handful of soil.
4. **Add the worms.** After putting the worms in the bin, place it in an area that will not get over 90° F in the summer or freeze in the winter. The bin can be kept indoors in a dark cupboard or closet, or in a protected area outdoors. Give the worms a day or two to settle in before feeding them.
5. **Feed the worms.** You may feed the worms raw fruit and vegetable scraps, coffee grounds and filters, and tea bags. Do not feed them meat, dairy products, greasy or oily foods, grains or pet wastes. To feed the worms, bury the food under a handful of bedding. Without removing the worms, feed the worms every day or every other day. There are many different ways to set up your worm bin. A good size for a classroom is a 5- to 10-gallon container, or one approximately 24” x 18” x 8”. It should be no more than 18” deep.
6. **Keep the worms healthy.** Worms require cool, consistent temperature, dark moist (not wet) places to live. You may need to remove the lid periodically to moderate moisture and temperature. You may add small amounts of food every day or a couple of times a week. Add moistened bedding as needed to keep the bin three-quarters full.
7. **Use the compost.** After several months, you will see a dark layer of castings on the bottom of the bin. To remove this “vermicompost” without removing the worms, feed the worms as if you were removing the food. You may need to remove the lid periodically to moderate moisture and temperature. You may add small amounts of food every day or a couple of times a week. Add moistened bedding as needed to keep the bin three-quarters full.

**Note:** You may want to post a note on the worm bin telling the custodian not to remove the bin or spray for pests near it. For more information on vermiculture, visit http://compost.cas.cornell.edu/worms/wormhome.html.

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**What’s Wild?**

**A Day in the Life of a Dog**

I wake up in the morning and the sun is shining. I stretch out my legs and trot into the kitchen. My owner is there with a bag of dog food. Oh boy! My tail wags so hard my whole body wiggles. We go out the front door. There are many smells to smell! My nose goes sniff, sniff, sniff. What’s that I smell? A squirrel! I run as fast as I can, pulling my owner behind me. Woof, woof! Woof! The squirrel scrambles up a tree and scolds me. Chitter, chitter, chitter! I’m tired now, so we walk home. My owner goes to work, and I spend the rest of the day napping and waiting.

In the evening, my owner returns and grabs the leash. Oh boy! My tail wags so hard my whole body wiggles. We go out the front door and along the sidewalk to the dog park. I’m off the leash. Oh boy! I run and play with the other dogs. My tail wags so hard my whole body wiggles. I’m tired now, so we walk home. Back in the house, my owner pours more food in my dish. Oh boy! My tail wags so hard my whole body wiggles. I eat all the food with a crunch, crunch, crunch and drink all the water with a lap, lap, lap. Now it’s time to rest. I find my favorite place on the living-room carpet and curl up into a ball. Snore, snore, snore...

**A Day in the Life of a Squirrel**

I wake up in the morning and the sun is shining. I stretch my head out of my nest and look around. Left, right, left. Looks safe! I scurry along the branch to the trunk of the tree. Did anything see me? I look left, right, left. Looks safe! I scamper down the tree to the ground. I look left, right, left. Looks safe!

I’m hungry. I begin my search for food. I search high and low, near and far—then suddenly, acorns! Oh boy! My tail wiggles so much my whole body shakes. I run as fast as I can to the acorns and grab one. Nibble, nibble, nibble. I put one in my cheek pouch for later.

Now I’m thirsty. I look left, right, left. Looks safe! I search for water, I search high and low, near and far—then suddenly, a puddle! Oh boy! My tail wiggles so much my whole body shakes. I run as fast as I can to the puddle. Did anyone see me? I look left, right, left. Looks safe! I stick my tongue in the water and drink. Lap, lap, lap. What’s that I hear? A dog! Oh no! Run, run, run! I run as fast as I can to the nearest tree. I climb as fast as I can to the highest branch. The dog is barking, woof, woof, woof! I reply with chitter, chitter, chitter!

I pull out the acorn I had hidden in my cheek. Oh boy! My tail wiggles so much my whole body shakes. I eat the acorn quickly. Nibble, nibble, nibble.

I spend the rest of the day searching for food and eating nuts—and running from dogs and cats. In the evening, I’m tired so I go back to my nest. I made it out of sticks and moss and leaves. I feel safe here in my treetop home. Now it’s time to rest. I curl up in my nest and go to sleep. Snore, snore, snore...

**Note:** Some children may have dogs that live outside while others may provide food or water for local squirrels and wild birds. You may use these seeming discrepancies to encourage children to further explore and refine their definitions of the differences between “wild” and “tame” or “domesticated.”

Growing Up WILD: Exploring Nature with Young Children © 2017 Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies
What's Wild?

Directions: There are a number of ways to make figures for use with a flannel board. One way is to trace and cut the figures directly from felt of different colors. Glue individual pieces together using felt glue to create finished characters. You may wish to enlarge the figures first. Some detail may be hard to replicate and creating the set will take time, but the felt figures will adhere well to the flannel board and offer children the tactile stimulation of working with textured fabric.

Another method of creating figures is to copy them onto card stock, color if desired, then laminate. Attaching small pieces of felt or Velcro to the back of each figure will allow them to “stick” to the flannel board.

If you don’t have a flannel board and don’t wish to make one, you might choose to use a piece of laminated poster board as a story board and adhere figures using “ticky tack” or similar adhesive.

You may also forego the story board altogether by using laminated figures as puppets. Children can use the puppets to help you act out the story.
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