



INTRODUCING .. **The WORM TOWER**

A NOVEL, SIMPLE WAY TO RECYCLE YOUR KITCHEN PEELINGS

This *in situ* composting idea was first introduced to me in 2012 by a small Perth manufacturer, based in WA. (STYLISTED GRAPHIC ABOVE)

It consisted of an in-ground worm feeding station (a small plastic tower), called WORMFEAST. Website: info@wormfeast.com.au

This concept, described below, requires nothing more than arable soil and a garden spade to set up one or more feeding stations.

The Wormfeast model cost about \$100 for three towers, but a cheap, simplified model can be made at home from a large garden pot, sturdy bucket with a lid or a 12litre steel, cooking oil drum. (Hundreds of these cooking oil drums are tossed out each week from Tasmania's commercial kitchens.)

- **STEP ONE:** drill multiple, 1cm holes through the sides. These become the entry points for hungry earthworms. You'll need an electric, cut-off wheel to remove the top off a 12litre drum. The base plate could also be removed, otherwise drill a few drainage holes into it too. It's beneficial to have two or three towers on the go so you can empty your food scraps into a different station each day, on rotation. Alternatively, fill one at a time. Your choice!

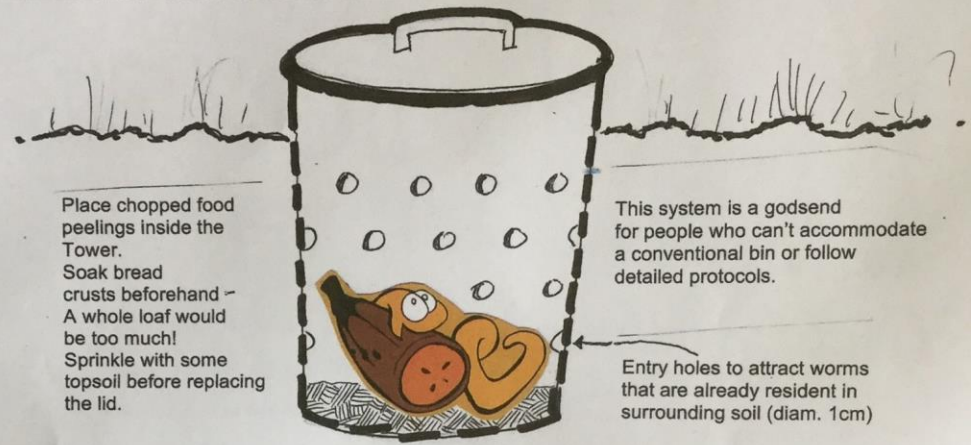
It's a mistake to overwhelm worms with too much food.

This in-ground method best suits families, which have only small quantities of scraps to manage.

- **STEP TWO:** Dig a deep hole for each feeding station and remove the soil. Insert the tower so that 2/3rd of the tower is underground. They can be left in place for years or repositioned after a year or so. If repositioning, take the new colony of worms and the tower to the new site.
- **STEP THREE:** If the feeding stations don't attract the resident earthworms to enter the tower in the short term, you must physically find some and put them in. A hundred is not too many! Red manure worms are sold in most garden stores.) Initially, give them some moist protein food; animal manure, coffee grounds; poultry deep litter or pelletised food from a pet shop.
- **STEP FOUR:** A successful outcome will see, after a few months of warm weather, a population explosion of livestock (manure worms), which will limit their breeding to suit the cramped conditions. Finally, scatter a handful of top soil over each bowl of food waste deposited to absorb gases; inoculate with microbial decomposers and make some grit available to help the worms' digestive processes. Rock dust and top soil are sources of grit.

See overleaf for design details for homemade worm tower.

PROTOTYPE: HOME MADE EARTHWORM TOWER/25L STURDY BUCKET



Place chopped food peelings inside the Tower.

Soak bread crusts beforehand - A whole loaf would be too much! Sprinkle with some topsoil before replacing the lid.

This system is a godsend for people who can't accommodate a conventional bin or follow detailed protocols.

Entry holes to attract worms that are already resident in surrounding soil (diam. 1cm)

The vermicast (worm poo) produced is reputed to be far superior in biological activity and enhanced (available) nutrients than any of the commercial composts on the market.

Feedback welcome to David Stephen, Backyard Research Centre
12 Delta Avenue, Taroona 7053
Ph: 03 6227 8390
dhstephen@bigpond.com