

****Red Worm Composting Special Podcast****

The “Ugly Truth” About Vermicomposting

~ **Written Companion Guide** ~

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****IMPORTANT****

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You will gain access to some other goodies, along with the “Worm Briefs” email series – plus it's a great way to stay in touch with major happenings in the Red Worm Composting community.

Thanks very much for you interest!

“Ugly Truth” Podcast Post Link:

<http://www.redwormcomposting.com/worm-composting/the-ugly-truth-about-vermicomposting/>

INTRODUCTION

Over the years I have seen a lot of the same vermicomposting questions/frustrations come up over and over (and over) again. I have also seen a LOT of people come and go. There has always been a lot of interest in this topic, and plenty of people willing to make the commitment and give vermicomposting a try...BUT then - seemingly more often than not - something (or multiple “things”) changes, and a lot of the initial excitement/optimism fades.

Of course, sometimes it IS just a case of basic neglect – people simply getting carried away in other directions, and forgetting about their vermicomposting efforts. But in a lot of cases there is more to it than that – people are genuinely putting in an effort to make it work, yet it's just not yielding the results they had hoped for. There seems to be a disconnect between what they had *expected*, and the actual reality.

I've put a LOT of time and effort into promoting this field of endeavor – and would love to see vermicomposting go “mainstream” - so, needless to say, this has been a great source of frustration for me. I've never been able to quite figure out what the “problem” has been – WHY exactly vermicomposting hasn't

been able to reach the same levels of popularity that other gardening activities - even including "regular" composting - have.

After thinking about it a LOT (aka "obsessing" - lol), I've reached the conclusion that while there is no ONE "problem" at work here – there really *are* only a very small handful of serious issues that people encounter. These are what I am referring to as the "Ugly Truths" of vermicomposting. The things people don't necessarily want to talk about all that much (myself included) when encouraging others to get involved.

It's important to note that most people with a decent amount of vermicomposting experience will be very familiar with these issues, and have likely figured out ways to deal with them – or have at least decided to not let them become "deal breakers" (this is why being a "mellow" person in general can help increase your chances of success with this activity). This is not meant to be any sort of revolutionary new source of information!

As is often the case with me – I am making an effort here to hammer home some of the core fundamentals of vermicomposting that can get glossed over at times (and yes, even I myself am guilty of this every now and again). Definitely no need to reinvent the wheel here.

Anyway...let's dive in and start looking at these "ugly truths".

We'll start with a quick overview of the 5 main challenges/frustrations – and then go back through each of them one at a time, in more detail.

1) **"BUGS"** - This is hands-down one of the biggest hang-ups people seem to have with vermicomposting. For whatever reason, many newcomers have the erroneous idea in their heads that the worms are the only organisms involved in the process – or at least the only ones we want involved!

2) **Bad Smells** – I'm always telling people that a "properly maintained" bin shouldn't smell – or that it might smell "earthy". Both of these are TRUE, but the term "properly maintained" is vague at best. The fact is, at one time or another most of us are going to have a system that doesn't smell like rose petals.

3) **Sloooow Progress** – People often get excited about vermicomposting when they read various cool "facts" like, "worms can eat their weight in garbage every day!". I'm certainly not claiming this is never possible (I know of cases where

worms were found to process MULTIPLE times their weight per day in professional systems), but for a new vermicomposter to expect this in a brand new worm bin is completely unrealistic. Bare minimum, it will typically take some time for a system to hit its stride – and there are a wide range of factors that can have a huge impact on this as well.

4) **Worms Die...Pretty Easily** – I talk a lot about the hardiness and versatility of Red Worms (European Nightcrawlers are similar). When it comes down to it they CAN put up with a lot of abuse – and can survive plenty of conditions that would kill us! But, there's really only so much we can expect from them. They certainly AREN'T indestructible – far from it. It's really quite amazing how many different ways there are to kill your worms (trust me – I know! Lol). This is one of the BIG differences between vermicomposting and regular composting – and something quite a few newcomers fail to realize.

5) **It's Not "Easy" Making "Really Nice" Vermicompost (Especially Not a Lot of It)** - We see these pictures of worm castings and compost – beautiful, dark brown, crumbly goodness – looking like something that fell down from compost heaven. We see all the rave reviews about castings/vermicompost as the ultimate all-natural plant “fertilizer”. Naturally, we get pretty excited about the prospect of harvesting truckloads of the stuff from our own worm bin(s).

But when it DOES finally come time for our first harvest (often after waiting much longer than we thought it was going to take! Lol), the stuff we harvest from the system usually looks NOTHING like the pictures. In plastic bins it can actually look (and even smell) downright terrible!

NOTE: It's important to point out that everyone has different ideas about the definition of “easy” and “really nice”. Obviously there are plenty of people out there who have no trouble producing good quality vermicompost. All I am saying is that this is one of the common challenges faced by brand new vermicomposters – especially those who are using plastic, enclosed bins.

OK – so there we have what I consider to be the 5 most common “deal-breakers” (or at least “opinion changers” - lol) of vermicomposting. I realize there are PLENTY of other headaches for the inexperienced vermicomposter, but I'd argue that the vast majority of them will tie in with at least one of the challenges/frustrations listed.

What's cool is that there are really only a handful of key strategies needed to prevent or at least deal with this handful of issues! We'll get to those in a minute.

I touched on something briefly, up above, that I think needs to be looked at in a bit more detail. I said "especially those who are using plastic, enclosed bins." This is no small thing, to be totally honest. In fact, this helps to explain a LOT in terms of why so many newcomers encounter challenges and frustrations.

I don't have hard figures to go on here, but my hunch is that a very high percentage of new vermicomposters start out using some form of plastic, enclosed worm bin – very often a basic, DIY tub of some sort. Plastic stacking bins are also a fairly common choice.

So what's the big deal, you ask?

In the words of Larry Martin (owner of "Vermitechnology Unlimited") - a well known worm farmer with probably close to 40 years of experience in the field:

"The most difficult vermicomposting operation is the plastic classroom or home bin. It's very unforgiving. I've always told folks, if they can do it in [a] plastic bin, they could run the largest vermicomposting operation in the world."

(excerpt from a *Castings Call* interview, Vol. 2, #4)

Now, if that doesn't offer you some perspective, I don't know *what* will! LoL

So why on earth do people (myself included) recommend these sorts of systems for brand new vermicomposters?!?!?!?

To inflict as much torture on you as possible, of course!
<insert evil laugh>

Seriously though, there ARE some perks to using plastic bins

1) They are great for forgetful/neglectful types – if you set up one of these bins reasonably well, with lots of bedding and a decent amount of food, you could probably leave it alone for several months (assuming some sort of moderate, indoor location) and open it up to find a thriving population of worms + lots of

vermicompost! These systems retain moisture VERY well.

2) They are also very cheap, lightweight and durable (referring primarily to the DIY tubs here) – so they offer a means of testing out vermicomposting without spending a ton of money.

So, it's really a matter of balancing the pros and the cons. And I definitely don't want to give you the impression that you can't have decent success with plastic bins – you definitely CAN. It just comes down to how you use them! Definitely some nuances there. (We'll look at various ways to make better use of these bins a little later)

OK – getting back to our “ugly truths”...

Obviously, my plan wasn't simply to offer up a serious “Debbie Downer” perspective on vermicomposting, and then leave it at that!

NO – the idea is to expose these ugly truths to the light of day, and then offer advice for helping you to prevent or at least deal with these challenges/frustrations.

I want to “educate and inspire” - not depress you! LoL

The big “secret” here, in a word, is “optimization”. In a nutshell this basically means we need to do everything we can to provide the worms (and microbes) with exactly what they need.

Before we dive back in with those “ugly truths”, let me start by offering you 3 KEY terms you'll want to remember.

- Aeration
- Bedding
- Living Material

Those of you in the [Easy Vermicomposting Course](#) may recognize these as the “Troubleshooting Triad”.

These 3 things alone can make a world of difference in your vermicomposting efforts!

OK – let's now go back through the “ugly truths” and look at them from an optimization perspective...

1) “**BUGS**” – Again, this is definitely one of the major ones, and very often a “deal-breaker” for new vermicomposters (or at least something that can result in people viewing vermicomposting in more of a negative light). First and foremost, let me emphasize the fact that you absolutely need to develop a certain amount of tolerance for “critters”. A well-balanced vermicomposting ecosystem contains a wide range of different organisms. Yes, worms get their lion's share of the glory – but they aren't even the most important organisms! Microbes are - and there are plenty of other potential helpers as well.

With that little pep talk out of the way – lol – let me now concede that there *are* definitely some insects (and other creatures) that can be a real pain in the butt, regardless of whether or not you are a seasoned veteran (or “mellow” person)!

What's rather funny, and ironic, is the fact that those who are completely “anti-bugs” also tend to be the people who put their vermicomposting systems outside – where the chances of infestation by all manner of different organisms are exponentially higher! lol

So yeah – something you might want to consider right off the bat is the possibility of keeping your bin indoors (I should mention that there are also some *other* hazards associated with keeping plastic, enclosed bins outdoors – such as the possibility of overheating when sitting in the sun).

As far as optimization goes – for starters, I definitely recommend freezing or cooking all fruit/veggie wastes before adding them to your system (just make sure to also thaw or cool them, respectively). Fruit flies can lay their eggs in the peels of fruits and vegetables, so you can end up with an infestation even when there are no fruit flies in the house. But freezing and cooking will ensure that the eggs are destroyed.

With fungus gnats you need to be careful with houseplants and soil etc brought in from outside. If you DO have plants in the house make sure to inspect them regularly, and try to keep them as far away from your worm bins as possible.

Taking additional steps to make your food worm- and microbe-friendly should also help to prevent serious outbreaks of both of these flying pests – and really,

any number of other worm bin inhabitants (eg mites). One of the most common issues is adding food materials the worms can't process right away – or adding too much food all at once. ALL of these organisms are opportunistic - so if you provide them with a huge supply of food, of course they are going to take advantage of it!

The freezing and cooking mentioned above both help to start the breakdown process, but I highly recommend that you also cut up (or even blend/grind) the foods as much as possible. This way the microbes and worms will be able to work on the materials MUCH more quickly – especially if you feed in moderation!

In my mind you should almost view a lot of the other organisms as “indicator species” - since outbreaks can often *indicate* that you are messing up! LoL One exception might be springtails. I always have loads of these guys in my systems (their role in the ecosystem is similar to that of the worms – so definitely don't be overly concerned if you see a fair number of them), regardless of how well-optimized the food materials are.

The size of your worm population can certainly have an impact as well. Anyone who has ended up with a serious infestation of fruit flies or some other critter during the “aging” period (before worms have been added) will see evidence of this. With zero competition, a lot of these other organisms will just go to town on the available food resources. But when you have a huge, thriving population of worms, and you're optimizing their food materials, the chance of encountering these major outbreaks is FAR lower.

I should mention quickly that certain types of “living material” (we'll talk more about these in a minute) can also help. Are you surprised? ;-)

Well-aged (earthy smelling) horse manure, for example – while typically loaded with it's own diverse population of critters – seems to have an amazing balancing effect on a typical home vermicomposting system. My guess is that this is mainly due to greater predation and competition.

2) **Bad Smells** – There are a variety of factors at work here and – as touched on earlier – even a fairly “well maintained” worm bin can end up smelling from time to time. Of course, one of the BIG culprits is the development of anaerobic (no oxygen) conditions. For whatever reason, anaerobic pathways just seem to result in the production of stinky compounds (eg. methane and hydrogen sulfide

– the infamous “rotten egg gas”).

It's important to point out that there are always going to be at least *some* anaerobic pockets in a vermicomposting system. If there weren't it would likely mean that there was “too much” aeration, and conditions that were probably too dry for the worms. The key is to provide as much oxygen as we can while still maintaining adequate moisture levels (and not disturbing the worms too much with excessive air flow).

Something that doesn't get mentioned all that much in relation to bad smells is the *type* of food material being added – this can definitely have an impact. For example, cruciferous vegetables such as broccoli and cauliflower contain sulfur compounds which can cause some funky smells during the breakdown process, whether they are excessively anaerobic or not. So that's something to keep in mind as well, especially if you are ever adding a lot of any one type of waste.

As per usual, feeding optimized food materials, and in moderation, is a great start. Also make sure there is adequate bedding material available to soak up moisture – especially if you really pulverize the wastes (since that releases a lot of water). Bulky bedding materials – such as shredded paper/cardboard/newsprint – provide the added benefit of encouraging more air flow (while still holding a decent amount of moisture).

If using a plastic inclosed tub for a bin, rather than drilling your air holes you might consider cutting them out using something like a box cutter or exacto knife. I've been amazed by the difference in air flow with nickel-sized holes along the upper sides and in the lid of these bins. OR, if you are a bit braver you might even go with a completely lidless bin. Instead of using the lid, just keep a really thick layer of dry bedding up top (something I actually recommend, regardless of whether or not you are using a lid). All that extra air flow will make a huge difference – and as you'll see, it can definitely tie in well with our overall “optimization” game-plan.

Let's get back to those “living materials” I keep mentioning. I'm sure many of you reading will wonder what exactly I am referring to. Living materials are basically any mostly-stabilized organic material (usually) containing loads of beneficial microbes. They are typically darker in color, and have an earthy smell. What do I mean by “stabilized”? This means these materials have broken down a lot already, or they are simply resistant to the break down process in general. Something like rotting food waste would definitely NOT be considered

“stabilized” - nor would fresh manure (although, in a sense it HAS gone through more of a breakdown process than the rotting food wastes).

Some prime examples of living materials include compost (including vermicompost of course), really well-aged manure, decayed leaf litter, and old rotten straw. Soil – although often dark and earthy smelling – is NOT typically considered a living material. But if you happen to have a really rich, healthy soil that is mostly organic matter it might be ok. You definitely want to steer clear of heavier soils containing clay or sand – and of course ANYTHING that comes out of a bag (since it won't likely be “living” at all, and can also contain harmful fertilizer salts).

The KEY with a living material is that you don't want it to affect the vermicomposting process negatively. It should have more of a buffering or optimizing effect, in fact. Getting back to our “bad smells” discussion, this is a prime example of a case where living materials can REALLY help! Composts have actually been used as effective “biofilters” for quite some time now, and there is good reason for that. All those active beneficial microbes are great at converting odor molecules into other compounds. They also just generally help the breakdown process along, meaning there is less opportunity for the odor molecules to develop in the first place.

3) **Sloooow Progress** – Why are a lot of home vermicomposting systems pretty slow at processing waste materials? Well, as is often the case, there are a lot of different factors that can play an important role. As you can probably guess by now – this is yet another case where we need to try and “optimize” as much as possible.

One very common factor a lot of people don't even think about is temperature. As temps drop down below 20 C (68 F) it is amazing how much the composting process can slow down – *especially* as you get down towards 10 C (50 F) and below. So, even something as simple as putting your worm bin in a cool basement or garage could have a major impact on the processing speed of the microbes and worms (and needless to say, systems that are outside in cold weather will be affected even more).

****An “ideal” temperature range for vermicomposting is 20-30 C (68-86 F).****

Another important factor is moisture content. As is the case with temperature,

there is a fairly narrow “ideal” range – everything outside that range on either end can cause issues (also like temperature, slow processing speeds at these extremes will be the *least* of your worries!). When materials are too wet, anaerobic conditions develop – not only resulting in stinky compounds, but also harmful compounds like alcohols and various acids.

Apart from potentially having unhealthy/dead worms, however, the lack of oxygen itself can really slow things down. In order to achieve a fast/effective stabilization of organic wastes you need to keep conditions as aerobic as possible.

On the other end of the scale – when conditions get too dry – microbes won't have enough moisture to work, and will likely go into some sort of resting stage. Similarly, worms lose a lot of water-weight and become more sluggish and inactive.

Unfortunately, it is a bit more difficult to offer a concrete “ideal” moisture range for the average home vermicomposter, since we don't all own moisture meters (I myself have never used one for vermicomposting, to be totally honest). Don't let that concern you, though – it is still relatively easy to maintain good moisture levels. With a typical plastic (non-draining) bin I usually say “make it as wet as you can get it without excess pooling in the bottom”. With something like a Worm Inn, VermBin, or Stacking Bin (eg Worm Factory), I'd say as wet as you can get it without excessive drainage (I personally prefer NO drainage).

Apart from these rough guidelines, an easy way to at least tell if there is *too much* moisture in a vermicomposting system is by using the good ol' fashioned “smell test”. If you are seeing a lot of liquid, and there are bad odors in the system there is a decent chance that it is too wet. You should mix in some dry, absorbent bedding to help balance things out.

Not to pick on plastic bins again (he says right before picking on plastic bins again – lol), but they tend to slow things down for multiple reasons. As mentioned, they hold in moisture really well, and they impede air flow – both of which can have a major impact on processing speed. As food starts to pile up (due to slow processing) you can also end up with the development of hazardous conditions for the worms (gas build up etc), which certainly doesn't help them go any faster..

As touched on earlier, cutting larger holes, or even going lidless can be a simple

yet effective strategy with these bins. You might even be able to achieve an almost "perfect" moisture/aeration balance this way since the plastic will still help to prevent excessive drying.

Food optimization – yet again – will make a WORLD of difference with processing speeds. Consider a chunk of fresh broccoli as compared to broccoli puree made from stalks of broccoli that had been frozen then thawed first. We're talking about a few days versus WEEKS. Just remember to compensate for all that extra liquid (with purees) by adding absorbent bedding as well (assuming you don't already have a lot in there).

Living materials – yet again – can also help a lot, especially when combined with the food optimization. All that extra surface area available for microbial colonization (when chopping everything up really well) and then coating all those surfaces with loads of beneficial decomposer microbes. What do you think the result will be?? lol

Worm population size – yet again – (lol – noticing some recurring patterns here???). When you don't have enough worms it is obviously going to be a lot easier for them to get overwhelmed with "too much" food. I still recommend letting a population "grow into" a system – but always let the worms guide you in terms of the amount of food that gets added. Just the strategies mentioned above should make a huge difference as it is – and when your worm population gets up to the "optimal" level you'll be amazed by the efficiency of the system!

Ok – there is one last strategy to mention that's definitely NOT something I really talk about all that much. In all honesty, I recommend that most new vermicomposters completely IGNORE what I am about to say, in fact! Lol It is definitely better to err on the side of caution when just starting out – and all the other strategies I've listed already should be more than enough to get the processing speeds ramped up a LOT as it is.

With that little caveat out of the way, here's my last little tidbit...

The amount of bedding you have in your system can actually have a fairly significant impact on the overall processing speed. When C:N ratios are up above 25:1 or 30:1 the microbes tend not to operate as efficiently and everything can slow down. My "there's no such thing as 'too much' bedding" advice, while true as far as worm health goes – is a bit inaccurate as far as processing speed goes. Loads and loads of bedding and moderate amounts of

food in a worm bin will likely result in slower processing that you'd see in a professional vermicomposting system – that's for sure.

So, IF YOU ARE AN EXPERIENCED VERMICOMPOSTER, you might try adding a bit less bedding – and maybe add some other n-rich materials such as aged horse manure (again – still implementing those other strategies mentioned above as well).

Here is a fairly simple scenario (again – recommended for more experienced vermicomposters) that would likely result in very fast (good quality) vermicompost production...

Mix well-aged (from outdoor heaps) horse manure with a small amount of shredded paper/newsprint (or don't even worry about the bedding at all) and add to a Worm Inn, VermBin24 – or some other single-compartment flow-through system with excellent air flow. Add well-optimized food wastes up top, cover with a bit more of the aged manure, add a healthy population of Red Worms (a pound or two for Inn – more with VB24), and let them go crazy.

NOTE: In both cases it is still HIGHLY recommended that you put in a “false bottom” before adding the materials/worms .

After an initial few days (no feeding) of letting the worms get settled, simply start adding the aged manure and optimized food waste on a regular basis (with perhaps a sprinkling of shredded paper etc each time you feed as well) – basically in relation to how fast the worms are processing everything.

In this case, you should literally have nice vermicompost ready within weeks instead of months.

BUT – again, this is NOT an approach I recommend for anyone fairly new to vermicomposting (or just generally, anyone not all that familiar with manures). Like I said, just using the other strategies mentioned earlier should make a HUGE difference in processing speed – so that's a good place to start!

4) **Worms Die...Pretty Easily** – Plain and simple, a lot of people give up on vermicomposting because they end up killing off their worms.

WHY/HOW? - in a lot of cases it really just comes down to not providing the

core requirements of the worms. Anyone who is a member of the [Easy Vermicomposting group](#) will have access to some very helpful lessons on the topic (of requirements and hazards), but even if you are not, all you have to do is sign up for the [Red Worm Composting email list](#) – and you will get free access to the RWC Guide to Vermicomposting along with a podcast specifically covering the topic of requirements and hazards! So now you don't have ANY excuses for messing up with the basics! LOL

All that being said, let's be honest here – even the most experienced of veterans among us will kill our worms from time to time (interestingly enough, I very recently – at the time of writing - received an email from a professional worm farming friend of mine, telling me how he had killed off most of his Red Worms due to an unfortunately oversight on his part). There are a wide range of things that can go wrong - so definitely don't stress out too much if this happens to you (and assume that you are hopeless at vermicomposting because of it)!

Apart from making sure you are REALLY familiar with the “requirements & hazards”, and implementing the optimization strategies outlined in this guide, when it comes down to it, it's never a bad idea to make sure you have AT LEAST one “insurance” bin up and running at all times.

These do NOT require a lot of time and effort (or expense) – this is actually a prime case where “less is more”...and a case where I strongly recommend using a plastic enclosed bin, believe it or not! As I mentioned, these types of systems tend to do extremely well when neglected – and that's exactly what we are going to do with our insurance bins.

Set the system up in a typical manner (visit my “[Getting Started](#)” page if you need more assistance with that) – but definitely make sure it contains a LOT of moistened bedding materials, and only a modest amount of food. This is a case where the drill holes are probably better than the larger cut holes – since we are literally just going to leave the bin to sit for weeks – maybe even months – on end. Once the bin has “aged” and the worms have been added (best approach here is to add a worm “culture” from another active bin if possible, rather than “pounds”), simply leave them be.

I HIGHLY recommend you keep an insurance bin indoors! Down in some small corner of your basement, or on a shelf somewhere should be fine. You'll probably end up forgetting it's even there. Initially, it's probably not a bad idea to check up on the system a bit more often just to make sure everything is ok,

but moving forward, other than a very-occasional addition of moistened bedding and a little food, you shouldn't do anything more with it.

Oh – and just so you know. If you happen to be an “anti-indoors” type of vermicomposter, and you live in a region that gets cold during the winter, THIS could be the answer you've been looking for! Trust me when I say that a bedding-dominated, rarely-fed bin like this is NOT going to get infested with “bugs”, or “stink”, or do anything else that's unsightly or otherwise obnoxious!

5) It's Not “Easy” Making “Really Nice” Vermicompost (Especially Not a Lot of It) – I know some reading this one will flat out disagree with me. But I'm gonna stick to my guns here, and also remind everyone that this primarily refers to the “average” new vermicomposter who is typically using some sort of plastic enclosed bin.

What's cool, though, is that we have basically already covered everything we need to know about creating top notch vermicompost!

Remember all those recurring recommendations – and the overall theme of “optimization”? Good! You were paying attention! Lol

Joking aside, let's do a quick review. Here is a small handful of strategies that will make a huge difference:

- **Aeration** – we need plenty of it, but not so much that we end up drying everything out.
- **Living Materials** – mix in those rich, dark, earthy-smelling materials like compost, really well-aged manure, and decomposed leaves to boost beneficial microbes and greatly improve the composting worm habitat (among other benefits).
- **Optimized Foods** – do everything you can to make foods “ready” for microbes and worms (i.e. break them down as much as possible) – this will speed things up greatly, and leave you with a much more uniform, high quality vermicompost.
- **Bedding Materials** – remember the RWC mantra, “bedding is your friend”, BUT do still keep in mind that excessive amounts of it can slow down the

vermicomposting process (not necessarily a “bad” thing) and the finished product may have different properties/ideal applications than castings produced by the pros (again, not necessarily a “bad” thing).

Wrap-Up

It's clear that YES, there are some potentially “ugly” things about vermicomposting – especially when you are brand new to the process. BUT, as I've hopefully illustrated in this report, all hope is not lost – not by a long shot! There is a very fine line between unsuccessful vermicomposting and successful vermicomposting – and the “secret” to achieving the latter really just comes down to 1) familiarizing yourself with the core requirements/hazards, and 2) implementing the small handful of strategies we looked at here.

Of course, if you *really* want to improve your chances of success, you might also consider starting out with a system that makes most of this so much easier than when using an enclosed plastic bin (remember that Larry Martin quote from earlier! Lol).

At the risk of switching to “sales mode” here (lol), my recommendations might include using either a [Worm Inn](#) (a “Mega” perhaps?) or a [VermBin](#)! There is a reason I promote these bins – it's because they work, and work WELL! Worm Inns have the added advantage of providing much more of a critter-free experience – likely more so than ANY vermicomposting system on the market, in fact. Outstanding air flow up above keeps most of the organisms down in the composting zone. Also, the mesh, zippered lid is very helpful since it blocks a lot of bugs from invading in the first place (and helps contain any that do happen to become established).

Both types of system offer the effective-simplicity of single-compartment flow-through vermicomposting. You'll end up with better quality vermicompost, faster – and will have an easier time separating it from your worms!

Mini product promotions aside (LOL) – let me once again remind everyone that there are a variety of ways to optimize, even when using “regular” systems (and different systems in general), so don't feel like you must use a single-compartment flow-through bin in order to succeed with vermicomposting. That's definitely not the case at all!

I really hope you found this podcast/guide helpful! Once again, let me express my appreciation for your interest in the Red Worm Composting website!

Please do sign up for the [RWC email list](#) so you can stay in touch with me and all my crazy vermi-shenanigans!

Happy Vermicomposting, everyone!

Your "worm-head" friend,

Bentley "Compost Guy" Christie