

Outdoor Red Worm Bin Tips

1. Use a broken chest freezer or old cooler as an outdoor bin. An old bathtub even provides a drain for the leachate.
2. Build a large in-ground worm composting bed. Simply dig a pit, line the sides with boards, bricks, or cinder blocks (to keep roots from surrounding plants out of your worm bed) lay **hardware cloth** on the soil and up the sides to prevent moles from invading. Line the bottom with a layer of corrugated cardboard.

Larger worm composting systems are less susceptible to atmospheric changes than smaller systems. You can add lots of food scraps at one time to a section without worrying about hurting your worms. Because the system is large, worms can move around and find a spot that is closer to their ideal temperature.

3. Put your worm bin next to the exhaust vent for your heater or dryer –use this discharged heat to help keep your worm composting bin warm.
4. If available, add beer mash or leftover cooked rice which will create heat when it breaks down. Add a thick layer of presoaked newspaper on top of the bedding and then dry newspapers on top of the moistened ones.
5. Stop feeding the worms. When the temperature lowers, the worms stop eating and any food leftovers may rot, encouraging organisms that can cause disease. The idea is simply to allow them to live through the winter, not have them create more compost.
6. Provide insulation – Insulation can be as simple as surrounding your worm bin with hay bales or as complex as attaching sheets of blue board insulation foam. Then cover with a waterproof tarp. This will keep in the warmer air and keep out snow, ice, and rain.
7. Keep the lid on to trap heat in. Each time the lid is lifted, built up heat will escape.
8. Heater – [Buy](#) or build a warm worm heater. [Use seed tray warming mats](#) with a thermostat so it will turn on automatically at a set temperature. Staple the warming mats to a board that lays flat (heat side down) on top of the worm bin.
9. Move a portable worm bin inside during the harsh winter months. A heated garage or cool basement will ensure survival. A shed will be much warmer than the outdoors.
10. Move some of your outdoor population into an indoor bin to be safe.
11. As soon as the weather warms to above 55 degrees F. (12 C.), uncover and feed the worms to help them recover.