

## **What are Worm Castings?**

Worm castings (also known as vermicast, vermicompost or worm compost) are simply worm poop. Worm castings are rich in minerals that are vital for plant growth. Vermicompost is the product of red wiggler worms living in the decomposing waste from the kitchen. The worms add various minerals to the decomposing process which makes them immediately available to plants. No protein, fats or oils are in the castings. The finished product is slowly released so that they will last longer. The systemic absorption of the castings can eradicate white fly.

## **Benefits of Worm Castings**

Provide adequate organic nutrients: One tablespoon of worm castings can provide adequate organic nutrients for feeding a 6-inch potted plant for over two months.

Fight plant diseases: The humus found in worm castings has the ability fight harmful bacteria and fungi in the soil. This, in turn, prevents plant diseases.

## **Ways to Use Worm Castings**

### **Top Dressing**

Top dressing is the simplest and easiest way of using worm castings. In this method, the worm castings are simply added to the top of the soil surrounding the plant. You can use it for potted plants as well as garden plants.

To top dress garden plants, simply spread about ½ to 1 inch of worm castings around the stem of each plant. A one-inch width band of castings may work but for greater benefits, make the band 2 or 3 inches thick. After this, water the plants deeply to soak the worm castings you just spread. The same procedure applies when top dressing potted plants.

Top dressing is ideal when you have a limited amount of worm castings for all your plants.

### **As a Liquid Fertilizer**

Worm castings are also great as a liquid fertilizer. To prepare this, you will need to mix 1 cup of worm castings with 1 gallon of water. Let it sit for one week. After one week, you can then use the water as a liquid fertilizer. You may also use it in controlling insects.

### **As Soil Conditioner**

As a soil conditioner, worm castings can turn a barren soil into a garden. The process of using worm castings as a soil conditioner is very easy. You just need to mix a layer of worm castings on top of the barren soil. The thicker the layer, the better for the plants. Water the worm castings after spreading them on top of the barren soil. After that, the soil will be ready for planting.

For more information, you may enjoy the books below:

The Worm Book : *The Complete Guide to Gardening and Composting with Worms*  
by Loren Nancarrow and Janet Hogan Taylor

Worms Eat My Garbage : *How to Set up and Maintain a Worm Composting System*  
by Mary Appelhof