

## Understanding Worm Farming

Some people ask, "Why in the world would I want to have a worm farm? There are plenty of other useful farms that sell vegetables, fruits, animals, and eggs. What good is a worm farm?" Well, it's an understandable reaction. After all, it's usually the quiet people in society that go unnoticed; so why shouldn't there be quiet creatures that go unnoticed? People underestimate the value of the worm.

It's true that there are worms that do damage to crops, animals, and people. Worms in your intestinal system are best flushed out. That's why dogs and cats, even horses and cows receive worm treatments. These worms are taking away nutritional values the animals need to survive.

What about the good worms? The first reaction to a worm is, "Ewww, gross." Or, "Is that a snake?" Well, understanding anything is the key to appreciating it more. No, a worm is not a snake. The good worms are not poisonous and have positive benefits that are not readily seen. They're hard-working little creatures and deserve our respect.

So, what are good worms? Earthworms, compost worms, and fishing worms are good worms. Earthworms are found in rich soil. If your plants are healthy and growing, chances are there are earthworms down there toiling away to help make this happen. Those die-hard fishermen can tell you about the benefits of a good, fat fishing worm! Catfish and bream are two of the type of fish that enjoy worms. Let's not forget the healthy birds that flock to your yard to sing and play for you and your children or husband. These birds eat more than just the seed in your feeder, which is a good thing since the seed will run out and be forgotten by the well-meaning providers. That's where the worms come in to take up your slack!

People farm worms for useful reasons. But there are also reasons most people can't accept in general society yet. Worms can be great food for people. Mealworms, earthworms, grub worms, butterworms, and tomato horn worms are all edible. There are restaurants in Singapore that offer worms as a meal choice. Worms are eaten in Thailand, Mexico, Australia, Africa, Asia, and South America. People who are trying to survive in the wild, like our military soldiers, are taught to eat worms as a source of protein. They're low in fat, too.

Although people may not readily eat worms in America, worm farms can still provide a source of exotic food for those who do. The worms can also be shipped to other places, but the temperature has to be right so they'll live during shipment and upon arrival.

Worm farms can also produce special food called "hornworm chow", meal, and flours for use in cooking breads and cakes. Hornworm chow is sold as a powder for about \$10 per 1/2 pound to feed about 85 worms to adulthood. This chow also feed chameleons.

So, as you can see worm farms are special and understanding them can be interesting and helpful.