



**Public Works Department
Office of the Solid Waste Manager
San Juan County**

915 Spring St. • P. O. Box 729 • (360) 370-0534 • www.co.san-juan.wa.us/publicworks
Friday Harbor, WA 98250 • Fax (360) 378-6405 • email: stevea@sjcpublishworks.org

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Helen Venada
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**VERMICOMPOSTING
HOW TO HARVEST WORM CASTINGS (COMPOST):**

If you're one of those composters who uses a worm bin for your food scraps, it may be time for you to harvest the results of months of composting. The trick is in successfully separating the worms from the finished product with the least worm disturbance.

For wood or plastic worm boxes, harvest after the worms have consumed most of the original bedding material:

1. Push the contents to one half of the box and add new moistened bedding to the open side.
2. Bury food scraps on the new side. The worms will migrate over within a few weeks.
3. Remove the worm castings for use and place new bedding in that side when needed.

For stacked tray worm "farms," the harvesting process creates less disturbance to the worms since you can empty the completed compost from lower trays anytime you need some. You may prefer to screen the "castings" to remove pieces of egg shell and other non-digested materials (the egg shells provide calcium in the form of lime that can help to neutralize soil pH and is beneficial to flowering plants in particular).

Earthworm compost is rich in water-soluble, easily-absorbed trace minerals, micro-nutrients, beneficial bacteria and microbes. Adding this natural fertilizer to your garden, lawn, or landscaping will improve your soil's water-holding capacity and aeration for optimum plant growth.

To use castings, dress the soil with a ½ inch to 1 inch layer and water to filter nutrients down to the roots of your plants.