

Hot Weather Tips & Tricks

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Hi everyone :)

Hot weather is almost here. Here are my tips and tricks for dealing with hot weather. If you have any other tips, please send them to me. I will include them in the next issue of the document.

Enjoy!

Regards,

Brian

Ideal temperatures:

We are interested in the temperature of the worm **BEDDING** - not so much the air temperature outside the farm.

Ideal **BEDDING** temperature for worms is between 10 and 25 degrees Celsius. At over 30 degrees they will suffer. Some species will try to leave the bedding to get a cooler position - I have found Africans are really prone to do this.

Get a thermometer to check the temperature:

I have found even cheap thermometers from the hardware store are quite reliable. There are some nice, cheap, sealed pool thermometers around. It's the best \$10 you will ever spend.

Cooling a farm with water:

DO NOT add water to a farm to cool it - water conducts heat better than air. It also drives out oxygen and ruins the structure of the bedding.

DO NOT add bare ice - use a frozen BOTTLE instead:

When it melts, ice creates water, see above point. Better to use a milk or soft drink bottle full of water, then freeze it. Two can be rotated in and out of the freezer.

Use a hessian bag or sheet as a "swamp cooler":

Drape a damp hessian bag, old towel or sheet over the farm. You can put the end of the bag in a bucket of water, which will draw the water up and keep evaporating it, cooling the farm. Be careful not to cover air holes with the bag/sheet. Use a couple of bricks or pieces of wood to create an air gap between the lid and the bag/sheet.

Limit food & pocket feed:

Food can heat up as it decomposes, especially if you add too much at a time. Limit food/nitrogen, giving more bedding/carbon instead. Be sure to pocket feed to give the worms room to escape the food.



Insulation:

You can place some insulation, like a car windscreen shade, over the worm farm. Make sure you leave an air gap between the farm and the insulation, especially if the air holes are in the lid. Use a couple of bricks or pieces of wood to create an air gap between the lid and the insulation. DO NOT wrap the whole farm in insulation - it will keep the heat IN.

Environment/placement/sun:

Place the worm farm in deep shade. If it gets ANY sun it will likely overheat and harm the worms. Try finding a better position, possibly in an open shed, carport or garage. You may find one side of your house gets no sun or is more heavily shaded. Place the worm farm there.

Garden sheds:

DO NOT put worm farms in small garden sheds - these are like ovens in the sun.

Blankets/coverings:

These are great when its cold but when it's hot, they keep heat in and limit air exchange. Remove the blankets. I don't use them at all, ever. Worms, in nature, have no blanket.

Air holes, especially in home made farms:

Often there are not enough air holes in farms, especially in the heat. Make bigger air holes. In a Styrofoam box sized farm I like to have two holes, 10cm x 15cm. I silicone insect mesh over the hole to restrict insect access.

Lids:

You can actually remove the lid completely as long as the farm is in a place where it doesn't get rained on. If your farm is outside where it can get rained on, you can also prop the lid open with a piece of wood to get more air, but still retain the covering of the lid.

Use a different worm farm: The garden feeding station ("GFS"):

If you just have NO LUCK keeping a farm cool, try changing your worm farm. A GFS is a bucket buried IN the garden, operated as a composting worm farm. I have found these to be REALLY bullet proof compared to common stacking farms. In general, worm farms in contact with the ground do better in extreme weather (heat or cold) as the worms can dive into the ground to escape. Details on making/using one at: www.TheWormMan.com.au/garden

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