

THE BENEFITS OF WORM CASTINGS (AKA WORM POOP)

What are worm castings?

Over 100 years ago, Charles Darwin observed the action of earthworms and the benefit of the castings they produced. Worm castings are not actually compost. Composting worms eat animal manures, newspaper, green waste, household scraps, bio-solids (human sewage), etc.- anything that has previously been living. Their digestive process kills pathogens (without the need for heat like traditional composting), and adds a complete array of beneficial biological organisms to the castings. Up to 10,000 different biological species are added! These beneficial organisms then provide conversion mechanisms so plants can more easily access needed nutrients. The worms most commonly used for castings are the red worm, *Eisenia foetida*, and the European Night Crawler (*Eisenia hortensis*). These worms eat 50-75% of their body weight every day!

Non-Toxic & Organic

Chemical fertilizers, fungicides, pesticides, and herbicides all require special handling to deal with the high level of toxicity. Worm castings are non-toxic and organic and therefore completely safe to handle and have around your kids and pets. Many chemical products can be toxic to worm castings, so be careful not to mix them.

Benefits of Worm Castings

- **Improved plant growth** (Increase plant growth + flower & fruit production.)
- **Soil softening** (Add organisms that soften soils & make them more workable.)
- **Biological decomposition** (Very quickly decompose scraps and wastes.)
- **Beneficial nematodes** (Help introduce beneficial insects to your gardens.)
- **Fungus control** (Help control fungus issues in your garden for the long term.)
- **Odor elimination** (Can control odors of manure & compost within hours.)
- **Insect repellency** (Many garden pests avoid castings due to the high chitinase level, which degrades insect exoskeletons. Castings are now being marketed as an organic insect repellent to deter insects such as aphids, white flies & mites.)

Purchasing Worm Castings

Many products on the market contain some worm castings mixed with compost or other bagged items – typically the percentage of castings in most products is about 1-3%. The worm castings we have available for purchase at Painters are 100% pure castings, grown right here in Old Fort. You will find live worms in the mixture. We recommend applying it to your garden beds and lawn to improve the soil and plant health as well as control garden pests and disease.