

Vermicomposting Troubleshooting

4 There are small black flies around my bin.

Fruit flies are attracted to food waste and just a few can lay eggs and cause a huge infestation. To prevent flies, keep food covered with a layer of dry bedding such as shredded newspaper. You can also use sticky trap or fly paper on the inside of your bin lid.

Possible Cause

Not burying food or overloading bin with food

Solution

Place a 1-inch thick layer of damp newspaper over top of the bedding until fruit flies subside and ensure food is always buried under bedding. Try limiting fruit in your bin for a while and remove fruit from your classroom. You can even try freezing your food scraps before adding to your bin to kill any fruit fly larvae.

Bin moisture is too high

Add extra bedding and ensure that there is proper ventilation.

Make Your Own Homemade Fruit Fly Traps

Bottle fly trap

Cut a small plastic water or soda bottle in half. Fill the bottom half with some apple cider vinegar and a drop of detergent. Turn the top half upside down and place it into the bottom half so that the neck forms a funnel. Secure the two halves with tape.



Fruit fly bait

In a small glass, vase, or similar vessel place one drop liquid dish soap, 2 tsp. concord grape or other juice, and 1 t. vinegar (any kind). Swirl together and coat the sides of the glass. Roll a sheet of paper into a cone, leaving a half-inch opening at the bottom. Be sure the funnel fits snugly into the glass and there are no openings at the rim. Secure the paper with a piece of tape. Place on a dish (in case of spillage) near flies. Dump out dead flies along with bait as needed (may be as often as twice a day initially). Replace bait and repeat until flies are gone.



Take Me Out to the Compost

Sung to the tune of "Take Me Out to the Ballgame"

Take me out to the compost,
Take me out to the pile.
Add some soil and a few good worms.
I don't care if I'm turn and churned,
'Cause it's root root root for the microbes;
If they don't live it's a shame.
For in two, four, six weeks I'm out -
In the old garden!

By Pam Ahearn, Waits River School, East Corinth, VT, as published in Project Seasons.