

DPW



Newsletter

Winter 2026

What's up with the worms?

- **Worm Bin Info**
- **Volunteer Days**
- **Expanding Operations**
- **Future Events + Opportunities**

Story Map

Click [this link](#) to see where all of our operations happen!

Quarterly Stats!

Food Scraps Collected : 4549.6lbs

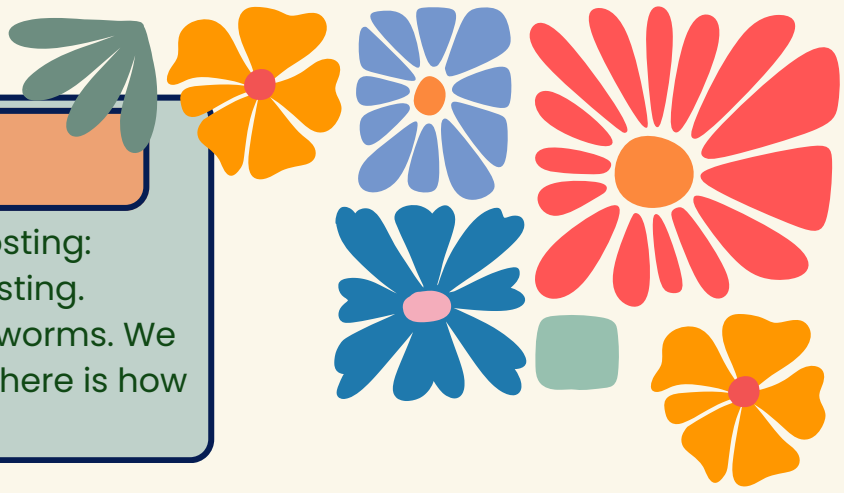
Compost Sifted : 1405.6lbs

Produce Harvested : Pepper, Squash, Radish, Strawberry, Passion Fruit, Broccolini

Most Food Scraps in One Day : 249.2 lbs

Vermicomposting

At DPW, we use two kinds of composting: hot composting and vermicomposting. Vermicomposting is composting using worms. We have two large worm bins at the prairie, here is how they work!



How does a worm bin work?

1 Food scraps from the dining commons

Red wiggler worms!!

*Bin is white to reflect sun - worms don't like light!

*worm tea is NOT drinkable

Worms eat:

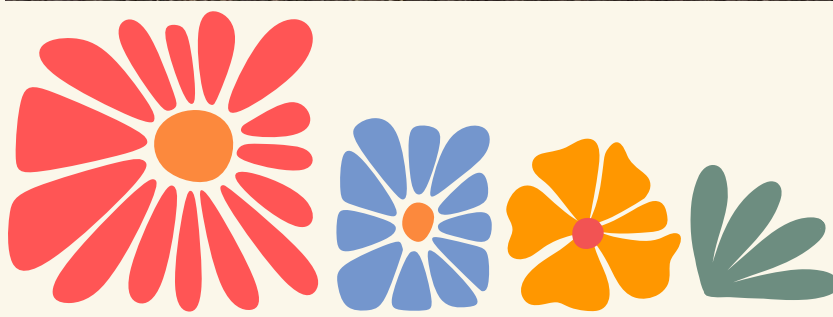
- leafy greens
- melons
- carrots
- bananas

✗ NOT super spicy or acidic foods

2 newspaper scraps and straw added to retain moisture, add carbon

3 metal rods hold structure but allow castings to fall through

4 worm poop ("castings") - used to make nutrient-rich "worm tea" for our crops



Volunteer Day Overview

To fulfill our goal of combatting food insecurity, it is important to us to engage with our community. This quarter, we worked with students from ENV S149/GEOG 161 'Food Agriculture, and the Environment' and WRIT 105CW 'Writing in Community.' We also held a Saturday Morning Live with the Edible Campus Program that had over 50 volunteers! We pride ourselves in the fact that volunteers can help us grow seedlings and then pick up the exact produce from those plants just weeks or months later at the AS Food Bank right on campus.



This February, we hosted "Love on the Farm" to celebrate Valentine's Day with our friends, loved ones, and our community. We enjoyed the afternoon making garlands with our farm-grown strawflowers and card-making. This is a yearly event and we are always excited to welcome both new and familiar faces to our farm!



We also love our volunteers! Here's what our volunteers said:

"I love that I get to work outside and that I get to work with soil and plants and my friends." - Cara Sanford

"I love watching the worms do their great work and spending my early mornings outside." - Hannah Troubh

Photo Gallery



Garland making at Love on the Farm!



Worm sorting with ES 149



Worms :)



Compost layers



Scan here for more photos from the quarter!



Portola

DPW began collecting pre-consumer food scraps from three dining halls (Carrillo, Ortega, and De La Guerra) about 13 years ago. With our new operations at the Prairie and our refurbished worm bins, we looked to begin collecting from Portola Dining Commons. Previously, going to Portola was logistically difficult due to its distance from 'The Grove.' With our move to the west side of campus, starting collection at Portola was a perfect fit. We are excited to announce that we have started picking up food from all four dining commons as of January 2026! So far, we have seen an encouraging increase in the volume of food scraps we collect per shift.



Orfalea Children's Center

We also began a partnership with our neighbors at the Orfalea Family Children's Center last fall. DPW now collects food scraps and leftover produce to compost, and we provide childhood education in collaboration with the Edible Campus Program.

These two exciting expansions will help us continue our goals of reducing food waste now and in the future.



Looking forward

Volunteer Days & Future Events - First Friday of every month, 9am-12pm. Come join us at the farm, help out and learn about what we do! We have some exciting events and workshops planned for spring quarter.

Hiring - Want to join our awesome team and become a Worm Wrangler next year? Applications are open right now and close on April 3rd. [Apply here!](#)

Feedback Form - Leave any questions, comments, or concerns on [this form!](#)

Keep in touch! - follow us on instagram ([@ucsbdpw](#)) to hear about our future events. Check out our [website](#) for more info :)

