**ASK FLORA – Vermiculture**

**Sage & Snow Garden Club**

**February 2018**

Dear Flora,

Can you tell me what vermiculture is?

Signed, Wondering Nelly

Dear Wondering,

Vermiculture is the process of using worms to decompose organic food waste, turning the waste into a nutrient-rich material capable of supplying necessary nutrients to help sustain plant growth.

Dear Flora,

Lately I’ve been hearing about vermicompost - where does this come from?

Signed, Cally Casting

Dear Cally,

Vermicompost is the product of the composting process using various species of worms (usually red wrigglers) to create a mixture of decomposing vegetable or food waste, bedding materials, and vermicast. Castings are rich in phosphorus, calcium, nitrogen, and magnesium. These are all important nutrients that help garden plants grow and stay healthy.

Dear Flora,

What do Red Wigglers (composting worms) eat?

Signed, Toothless Terry

Dear Toothless,

Red Wigglers like to eat a combination of fruit and vegetable compost (stay away from citrus-based fruit as the high acid content lowers the ph level in the worm bin), mixed with manure from vegetable eating animals (like rabbits), newspaper, garden waste and coffee grounds.

Dear Flora,

If I place a worm bin inside my home to keep it warm during the cold months will it smell?

Signed, Peppie LaPue

Dear Peppie,

Worm bins should never stink! A healthy bin should smell like healthy soil. A bad smell is an indicator that something has gone wrong and needs to be fixed. Most common problems are too many food scraps (cut back on the amount you are feeding) or too much water that causes anaerobic decomposition.

Dear Flora,

Why should I compost?

Signed, Table Scraps

Dear Table,

Soils are the basis of life. Ninety-five 5% of our food comes from the soil. Soils play a key role in absorbing carbon and filtering water. Organic farming may not be the only solution, but it is the single best way that we as individuals can help ensure the Planet’s continued survival for the foreseeable future.

Dear Flora,

How do I find more information about worm castings and gardening?

Signed, Wiggles Downunder

Dear Wiggles,

Sage and Snow Garden Club meetings are typically held on the third Tuesday of the month from 5:00pm to 7:00pm at the Sublette County Weed and Pest Office at 12 S Bench Road Pinedale. The March 20 educational topic will be Raspberries. Everyone is welcome. The website [www.sageandsnow.org](http://www.sageandsnow.org) also has all our Ask Flora articles and the 2018 events are listed, such as the August Garden Tours!