

A world of worms

If the children at Queenstown Preschool and Nursery are anything to go by, it's never too early to start learning about composting and worm farming.

The children have been diving into the world of worms thanks to a new worm farm and live worms, funded through Queenstown Lakes District Council's Waste Minimisation Fund.

Rachel Rooke, the team leader of Moa Room, has been the driving force behind the project.

Ms Rooke said they applied for the fund because they have a few "passionate garden enthusiasts" amongst staff and some of the children don't have their own gardens at home, as well as that their own preschool garden needed some love and attention.


"We started way back at the beginning with our three-and-a-half-year-olds, asking them 'what do you think a worm farm is? The level of enthusiasm with the children is amazing," said Ms Rooke.

The children went to St Joseph's School to visit a year three class who showed off their worm bin set up.

"Some of the tamariki were not impressed that the worms did wee on their hands, but they learnt that that is what makes the garden grow. The school children put all their food scraps from their lunch boxes in the worm farm."

Next, they dialled in Dr Compost for a visit.

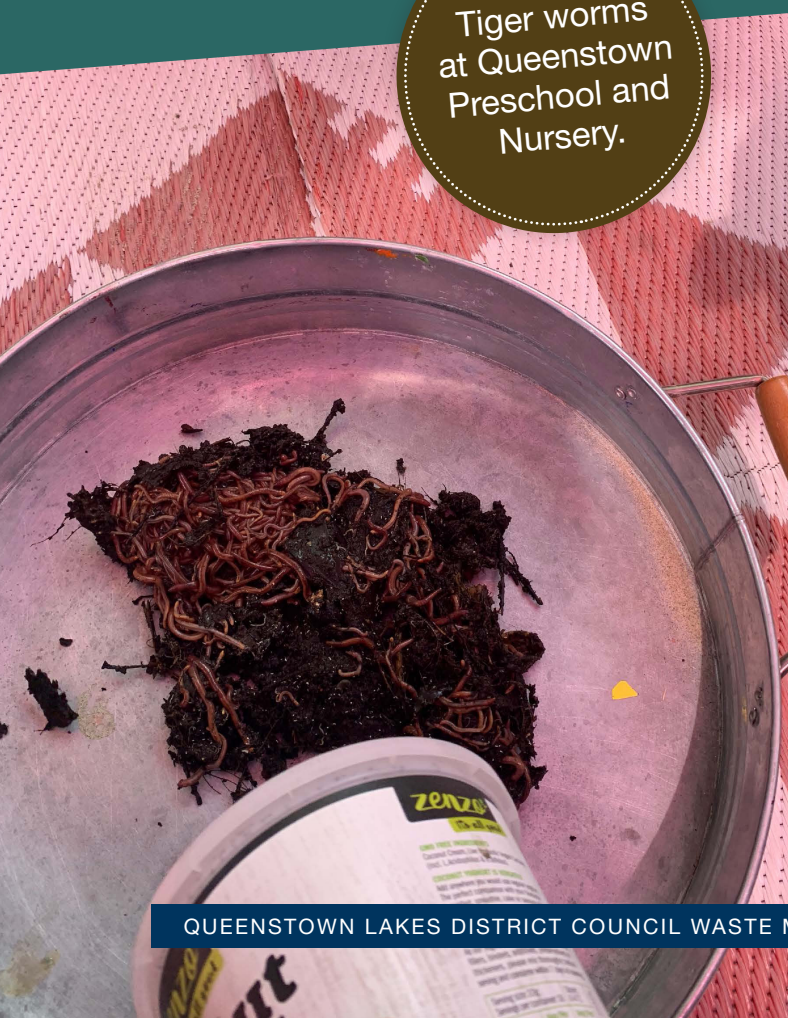
"He answered all our questions we had about worms. The worms that we need are called tiger worms and they don't like citrus peel because it's too acidic for



Tiger worms at Queenstown Preschool and Nursery.



Children participate in hands-on learning about worm farming and composting.



them. The children have caught on very quickly what we can and cannot feed the worms,” said Ms Rooke.

“The children have been absolutely engrossed in the what, why and how of the workings of a farm.”

The preschool garden is receiving much more love now and they have been growing spinach, silverbeet, potatoes and rhubarb as a result of the worm farm castings.

Some of these veggies make it onto pizzas, or home to where the parents can make something with their children.

“The worm farm had to be moved out the back for the winter where there is more sun, but our journey has just begun because there is still so much to learn about keeping a worm farm and composting.”

Worm farm tips and tricks:

- > Worms don't like citrus, onions, liquids, or mouldy bread.
- > Move your worm farm into the shade in summer and into the sun in winter.
- > Keep your worm farm moist but not wet.
- > Check out Dr Compost on Facebook for more advice.

If you're keen to try worm farming, QLDC subsidises the purchase of worms. Check out the QLDC website for more details.