

# All About Composting

## **Pre-Visit and Post Visit Activity Suggestions**

Below are some possible activities for your class before or after the visit, we love to know what you do at school, so please send us stories and photos- they make our day!

Some ideas to get you started:

### ***Across the Curriculum***

**Mathematics:** graphs, measurements, weights of scraps, etc.

**The Arts:** collages, models, dying, making paper, design, bulletin board displays, role-plays, games

**Health and Physical Education:** safety of compost.

**English:** stories, talks, media, writing,

**Technology:** designing and making models, experiments to test properties,

**LOTE:** make lists of items which can be composted and make a brochure which explains how to make a simple worm farm or compost bin.

### **Science:**

- Predict what will happen to different compost critters in new environments.
- Watch mini-composts made at the KESAB Education Centre or in school. Put these in different environments and observe.
- Using a hand lens, draw the shape of compost critters.

### **Society and Environment**

- Talk to grandparents and / or others alive 50 years ago about how they got their fruits and vegetables and what they did with them.

At the supermarket, make a list of fruits and vegetables which can be bought without excess packaging.

### ***Questions and Investigations***

Brainstorm questions the students want to research and investigate. For example:

- How long does it take to make compost in a compost bin?
- How long does it take to make compost in a worm farm?
- Besides kitchen and garden scraps, what else can be composted?
- Why can some materials not be composted?

### ***Report and Record findings***

- Students can record their findings and present them to members of their classes in the school, and through our newsletter. Methods include: posters, models, displays, discussions, graphs, charts, projects, drawings, articles and reviews.

## Compost Alphabet

- Generate a list of fruits, vegetables and compost critters from A – Z.

Aim: To raise students' awareness of the importance that fruits, vegetables and compost critters play in their everyday lives.

Procedure: Divide the class into 3 groups.

One group has to think of vegetables from A-Z

Another has to think of fruits from A-Z

The third group thinks of as many insects, arachnids, etc. and / or garden plants from A-Z.

Each group is given a set time to make a their lists beginning with each letters of the alphabet. For example:

C = celery                      C = compost

Each acceptable word receives points as for words in a scrabble game, for example:

compost = 3+1+3+3+1+1+1=13

Collate lists, deleting words that are listed twice.

Complete three lists of all the words, fruits, vegetables and compost critters / features

Calculate the scores and send the list of words to the KESAB where they will be included in our "Dictionary of Compost!"

Scoring System:											
A=1	B=3	C=3	D=2	E=1	F=4	G=2	H=4	I=1	J=8	K=5	L=1
M=3	N=1	O=1	P=3	Q=1	R=1	S=1	T=1	U=1	V=4	W=4	X=8
Y=4	Z=10			0							

## Worm Count

### Materials:

Garden trowels  
 reused plastic shopping bags  
 gloves  
 masking tape  
 plastic containers  
 textas

### Procedure:

- Take the students into the school garden. Ask them where they think they would find the most worms.
- Choose 5 different locations, including a compost bin, if possible.
- Dig up a large trowel full of dirt and place it in a plastic container
- Map the site of the diggings
- Record the site number on the masking tape and add to each container.
- Return to a cleared area and empty the diggings separately on the plastic shopping bags.
- Divide students into groups and allow them to separate the worms from the dirt.
- Each group records the numbers of worms found.
- Return the soil and worms to the exact locations.
- Make a class graph of the findings.
- Compare findings and discuss why some areas had more worms than others, etc.

As a follow up, ask students to complete the worm count sheet and identify the body parts.

## Making Mush Pots

**Aim:** To make and test the strength and time it takes for a “mush pot” to decompose in the ground.

### Materials:

- paper or plastic cup or 200ml yogurt container
- mixing bowl (ice cream container will do)
- fork or potato masher
- spoon
- two sheets of newspaper per pot
- water
- potting mix
- some seeds or a seedling

### What to do:

1. Tear two sheets of newspaper into small pieces. Place into bowl, cover with hot water and soak for at least 3 hours.
2. Pour off excess water and mash the paper with the fork or potato masher until it looks like thick porridge.
3. Use an old paper or plastic cup as a mould for the pot. Spoon two or three spoonfuls of the paper mush into the bottom. Using the fork, punch some small holes into the base of the cup to allow for drainage.
4. With your fingers, hollow out the centre, pressing the mush against the sides and base of the cup. Make the paper layer about 5 mm thick. Squeeze out as much water as you can with your fingers. Carefully pour this water out of the cup.
5. Place the pot and its cop in the sun or near a heater to dry. This should take about 7 - 10 days. When the pot is nearly dry, remove it from the cup, taking care not to damage the cup, so it can be reused. Let the paper pot dry completely.
6. Fill the pot with soil and use it to grow seedlings. When you are ready to plant the seedling, place the seedling and it's pot in the garden. In time, the paper pot will decompose naturally.

Adapted from *Garbage Reincarnation*, p. 22, by Pat Armstrong, Gould League Recycling Education Centre