

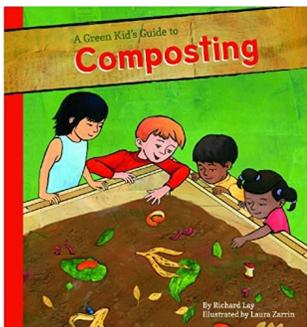
Nov/Dec 2020

Issue 16

# SWIFTlet

Soil and Water Information for Teachers: lessons on environmental themes

## LITERACY CONNECTIONS



**Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District**  
Creating Conservation Solutions for Over 70 Years

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Columbus, OH 43212  
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## COLORFUL COMPOST

There is a lot to be thankful for during the months of November and December—including soil! Did you know there is a special day just for soil?



5 DECEMBER 2020

**World Soil Day**

Keep soil alive,  
protect soil biodiversity

**World Soil Day** is celebrated in December and is a special day to raise awareness about the importance of soil and share ideas about how we can all work together to improve soil health.

One way we can celebrate and protect soil each day is by composting. What is **composting** you ask? You may recall from our **Splendid Soil SWIFTlet** that soil develops in distinct layers called horizons. The topmost layer, rich in organic matter, is called humus. Humus is similar to compost in that both are made from decaying organic material and are created by decomposing organisms such as bacteria, fungi, worms and sow bugs. These organisms break down organic material, creating a dark, crumbly, earthy mixture. Composting increases the rate at which organic matter breaks down by creating an ideal environment for decomposing organisms. The end result is a nutrient-rich material that enhances soil, reduces the need for chemical fertilizers and provides plants with important nutrients for growth and survival.

If you are ready to give composting a try, it's important to remember that the process can be as simple or complex as you would like and really depends on how fast you want results, how much material you have and how much time/effort you would like to put into your composting project. There are many great resources with detailed information to assist you in your compost journey—below are just a few. Happy Composting!

**National Geographic Kids: Create a Compost**  
**Natural Resources Conservation Service: Composting**  
**Environmental Protection Agency: Composting at Home**

## Did You Know?

Did you know that you can also compost indoors? A **vermicomposter** is a worm composting bin that is designed to be used inside. With the help of common red wiggler worms, kitchen scraps like banana peels and lettuce leaves are converted from trash into nutrient-rich compost treasure! Click [here](#) to learn how to create and maintain an indoor worm composting bin.

# COLORFUL COMPOST

## COMPOSTING & FOOD WASTE AT HOME

### Let's learn about food waste and composting at home!

#### Background:

Food waste is a big problem! Our friends at the **Solid Waste Authority of Central Ohio (SWACO)** are working hard to address the issue of food waste in our community through the **Save More Than Food** public awareness campaign and they need our help! Each day in Franklin County, 1 million pounds of food waste is landfilled. That's equivalent to 187 million meals each year! This food waste impacts the health of our community, economy and environment. The great news is that we can work together to make small changes **at home** and **at school** (like composting!) that have big impacts.

**SAVE MORE  
THAN FOOD**  
MAKE A DIFFERENCE

#### Supplies:

- Computer or device with internet access
- Copy of the **Food Waste Audit Worksheet**
- Pencil/Pen
- A meal

#### Procedures:

- Begin by testing your Food Waste Knowledge using this **quiz**, created by SWACO.
- Conduct a **Food Waste Audit** at home (created by our friends at California Academy of Sciences). In this activity you will:
  - Collect data on how much food is wasted at each meal
  - Analyze and interpret data
  - Develop solutions for preventing food waste
- Extend learning and understanding by researching ways your family can **take action to reduce food waste**.
- Talk about it! Have a family discussion where each family member shares their ideas, goals, and the actions they will take to reduce food waste.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### Let's Learn About Compost: Compost Stew Read Aloud



### Make the Most of Compost

### How Compost is Made: A Field Trip

### American Farm Bureau Foundation: At Home Learning, Composting

### Composting for Kids with Peppa Pig

### Caillou The Magic of Compost Read Aloud



### Pumpkin Jack Read Aloud

## GIVE IT A TRY!!

Make a soda bottle composter at home!  
This simple compost bin allows you to observe organic matter as it turns into compost.

Watch the Tutorial Video [Here](#)  
Read the How-to Instructions [Here](#)  
Additional instructions from SWACO can be found on their [At-Home Activities page](#) (Compost in a Bottle)

## EXTEND LEARNING:

1. From your *Food Waste Audit*, what food item were you most likely to throw away? Why? Can it be composted?
2. What animal is important in both the composting process and the decomposition of fallen leaves?

### Composting: What Goes?



"Browns": bulky, tough, dry, fibrous materials provide carbohydrates (carbon)



A little weathered is best!

"Greens": fresh, green, wet materials provide protein (nitrogen)



Bury and cover food scraps to deter rodents

To grow and multiply, composting organisms need 4 things:

carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, and moisture.

Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service are equal opportunity providers and employers.



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