

The Composting Tree



Grade Level: 3-6

Time Needed: 45 minutes

Supplies: Bucket of compost, props for activity

Location: Classroom

Objective: Students will learn where all the leaves "go" between fall and spring by turning themselves into worms, microbes, and other compost bin creatures.

***Depending on the grade level and time available we can approach the activity in several ways.

Activity I: *The Composting Tree* (page 43 in the curriculum *Soils Alive*, by the National 4-H Council). In this activity the students will be transformed into a tree, leaves, a compost bin, microbes, compost bin critters, aerobic bacteria, heat, pitchfork, moisture, etc. The students will act out the processes that happen within the compost bin.

Optional Activity II: Video- Home Composting: Turning Your Spoils to Soil, 17:30 minutes. Shows several different styles of compost bins, items to include and exclude from your bin and instructions for converting yard waste and food scraps into good quality compost.

Extensions:

- Incorporate compost or worm compost with potting soil and then compare germination rates of soil with compost vs. plain potting soil.
- We can bring a backyard compost bin made from recycled plastic to the program. It is the same bin that Bremer County Recycling sold at the Waverly Recycling Center in June, 2004 to promote organic waste diversion.
- Does your school want to start composting on-site? We can help the school with a composting education campaign for staff, students, maintenance and cafeteria staff.