



Minibeasts
and Leaves

Simple compost with worms

Age: 7-14

Topic: Biology

Time: 1 hour

What should learners already know?

- Earthworms are important parts of our ecosystem, and feed on dead or decaying matter.

What equipment will I need?

- Box with high edges
- Newspaper
- Soil
- Leaves
- Earthworms
- Lid or plastic wrap.

How will learners explore this?

1. Place newspaper in the bottom of the box and add a layer of leaves on top of it. Then apply a layer of soil so that it covers the paper and leaves properly.
2. Go out and look for earthworms. You will find them in the ground. Look for them by digging in flower beds, old composts, or in burnt horse manure.
3. Put the worms in the box. Cover the box with a lid or plastic wrap that protects the compost from light and drying out.
4. The worm compost is ready!
5. Now the worms need food. Study what happens when you feed them with, for example: kitchen paper, apple leftovers, a little orange peel, potato peelings, a piece of plastic, a piece of cardboard.
6. If you want to keep the compost for a longer time, do not forget to feed the worms with things you have come to the conclusion that they like.
7. Remember that there must be no frost outdoors when you return the worms.

How can we show the learning?

- Treat this activity like a small science experiment. What foods did the worms seem to like?
- Challenge children to explain why worms may seem to eat more of one food than another. In particular, did worms seem to eat as much of the man-made objects as the food waste?
- Use this activity as an opportunity to teach children about worms and soil biodiversity:
- The soil is teeming with life and activity from thousands of organisms. An important group of organisms are the decomposers. Some decomposers that are easy to detect with the naked eye are the earthworms. They like darkness and moisture and live under the ground.
- The worms aerate the soil by digging passages that allow water and oxygen to enter into the ground.
- When the leaves have fallen to the ground, they are decomposed by worms, which in turn become food for different bird species.
- Get to know the worms by borrowing some that you keep for a while in a simple worm compost.



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