Activity

The Worm Family Lesson
By Jeremy Brunaccioni

Grades: PreK–K, 1–2, 3–5

Overview
After reading a book, children discuss how soil forms over time. Students see their food scraps disappear as the worms convert it into compost-worthy castings.

Objective
Students will "explain and give examples of the ways in which soil is formed (the weathering of rock by water and wind and from the decomposition of plant and animal remains.)" --Massachusetts Science and Technology/Engineering Curriculum Framework

Materials
The National Gardening Association offers a WormLab and red wigglers. You can visit them at http://nga-gardenshop.stores.yahoo.net/16-1158.html, or read the following description: "This 21" x 12" x 15"h worm bin and a supply of red wiggler worms will allow your family to compost up to 7 lb. of food scraps each week. The sturdy plastic bin with carrying handles has special vents for aeration."
FIRST get a copy of Worms Eat My Garbage by Mary Appelhof for dos and don’ts and pitfalls to avoid.

**Directions**
Have a discussion about how worms help keep soil healthy. Introduce the worm bin and worms. (If students see you handle the worms (no grimaces please) they are more likely to embrace the project and feel comfortable handling the worms themselves.)

Set up the bin in the cafeteria. It may be helpful to post some informational posters so that students don't accidentally throw trash into it.

Find a quiet time after lunch when your class can add some food scraps to the bin. www.cityfarmer.org advises "You can compost food scraps such as fruit and vegetable peels, pulverized egg shells, tea bags and coffee grounds. It is advisable not to compost meats, dairy products, oily foods, and grains because of problems with smells, flies, and rodents."

**Lesson Extensions**
Add a worm bin to your classroom to compost snack-time foods.

**Subjects:**
Composting

**Duration:**
30 Mins