



# EnviroKids!

Educational Tools for Tomorrow's Environmental Heroes

Issue Created by



Spokane County Regional  
Solid Waste System

## Put food waste in its Place!



Waste is a big problem that affects our surroundings, health, and the environment. Think about the things you throw in the garbage—where do they go and what are they made of? Trash is made of many different things and can be split into two types: organic and inorganic waste.

**Organic waste** comes from things that were once alive, like food scraps, yard clippings, and other natural materials. Organic waste can break down into something useful called compost, which is great for soil.

**Inorganic waste** is made from things that were never alive, like glass, plastic, and metal. These materials take thousands of years to break down.

Both types of waste can cause problems for our planet. Knowing what different items are made of helps us manage waste in a way that's better for the environment.

Food waste is a huge part of our trash—about one-third of it! The good news? We can help by turning food waste into compost, which is good for the soil and the planet!

We can reduce food waste by planning meals, making a shopping list, and getting creative with leftovers. Everyone has some food waste, but you can turn things like fruit and vegetable scraps into compost. You might even have a green bin at home for food scraps. Composting, whether at home or through a green bin, is an eco-friendly way to handle food waste!

Carefully planning meals and using a list when grocery shopping can help to prevent food waste.



**AVOID OVER SHOPPING FOR ITEMS THAT  
MAY GO BAD BEFORE THEY CAN BE USED!**



Many food producers and farmers donate excess food to be distributed to people in need.



*Donate to people  
in need*

Hungry farm animals love to eat food that falls from trees or is too old to be sold.



**FEED ANIMALS**

Anaerobic digestion of non-edible food can produce gas. Oil, fat, and solid meat can be used in products like soap and cosmetics or turned into biodiesel-- a nontoxic fuel!



**INDUSTRIAL  
USE**

Non-edible food can be composted and is a great soil amendment. Some processes can break down fruits and vegetables, while others can even break down meat and dairy!



**COMPOSTING**

Food waste sent to landfills or incinerators has negative environmental impacts. Help keep food waste out of the garbage!



**LANDFILL/WTE**

**FOOD  
RECOVERY  
PYRAMID**



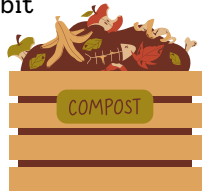
## ROT

### Nature's Recycling



Have you ever seen something rotten? It usually looks and smells pretty gross, but rot is actually a good thing. The process of rotting is also called **decomposing** and is nature's way of recycling. Things that were once alive break down into smaller pieces and the Earth can absorb those nutrients again. Humans have found a way to speed up nature's rot process by mixing organic materials in a bin or pile until they turn into a crumbly, soft, material called **compost**.

Compost can be added back to the soil to help plants grow –it's like vitamins for plants. People can make compost in all kinds of ways, but it is usually done in a backyard bin or pile. Organic materials like leaves, grass clippings, food scraps, and even manures such as rabbit or chicken poop are all mixed and left to decompose. Depending on things like moisture or heat levels, all those materials can turn into compost in about 6 weeks. The compost can then be spread in gardens, flower beds, or even lawns to help the plants grow.



## BARR -TECH: Compost on a BIG scale

About 20 miles west of Spokane is an industrial compost facility called Barr-Tech. This facility processes organic materials to make compost. You might have a large, green container that is picked up alongside your garbage and recycling bins. This bin is meant for yard waste, leaves, grass clippings, and even food scraps. The contents are delivered to Barr-Tech where they are carefully mixed and processed into nutrient-rich compost. Barr-Tech provides finished compost to farmers, landscape companies, businesses, and anyone else who wants to improve their soil and grow healthy plants. Compost facilities like Barr-Tech help the environment by managing organic waste in a way that is good for the planet.



## COMPOSTING WITH WORMS



**Worms can eat kitchen scraps such as fruit and veggie trimmings and coffee and tea grounds. Their castings (poop) add nutrients to soil for healthier plants! Follow the steps to make your own worm bin!**

1. Take a solid-colored plastic container and drill air holes on the lid, sides, and bottom.
2. Put a bit of sand and/or soil at the bottom and a thick layer of shredded paper on top
3. Use a spray bottle to moisten the shredded paper
4. Bury fruit and veggie scraps at the bottom of the bin. Avoid adding meat, dairy, fats, and oils.
5. Your bin is ready for worms!



## Think About It



**Food loss** is a term that is different than food waste. Food loss means food that never makes it to a grocery store to be sold. The food might have been harvested or stored incorrectly but it can also be because many people only want to buy "pretty" food. When a vegetable or fruit grows and doesn't look "right", retailers might decide it's not pretty enough to sell. There is nothing wrong with the food, it just looks different. Why do you think people don't want to eat "ugly" food? Would you choose to eat food that looks different? Why or why not?



## Waste Challenge

### At Home Waste Audit



Curious about how much food waste your family throws in the trash? Save all food scraps each day and weigh them. After one week, add it all up. Now multiply that number by 52 to estimate how much food waste your family makes in a year.

Day	Weight
Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	
Saturday	
Sunday	
<b>Total:</b>	
<b>Total x 52:</b>	



Envirokids is a collaborative effort among multiple environmentally focused agencies in the Spokane region working to provide locally relevant educational resources to teachers and families.