



LiveWell Kids Garden and Nutrition Program

Lesson 3: Soil Health & Nutrients

FIRST GRADE

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, students will:

- Understand that soil is alive and helps plants grow.
- Recognize that compost feeds the soil.
- Identify decomposers as living things that break down old plants.
- Identify whole foods as foods that help their bodies grow.

SUPPLIES AND SET-UP

- Garden activity – “Compost Observation”
 - Laminate: *Decomposers in the Compost Pile*
 - 2 cafeteria trays
 - 2 scoops of compost from the composter
 - Box of magnifying lenses
 - Box of tweezers
 - Book: *Compost Stew*
 - **Bring from classroom:** 1 piece of paper per student and drawing tools.
 - Place cafeteria trays on picnic tables with different scoops of compost in each tray.
 - Place magnifying tools and tweezers around trays.
- Nutrition activity – “Whole Foods”
 - *Food Cards*
 - Place *Food Cards* where they are accessible for discussion.

PREPARATION

- Refer to the [LiveWell Kids Volunteer Manual](#) on the [LiveWell Kids webpage](#) for details about preparing for the lesson one week prior and the day of.
- Allow **30 minutes** for set-up and preparation on the day of the lesson.



INTRODUCTION & MINDFUL BREATHING (1 Minutes)

- Introduce yourself and other volunteers.
- Guide students through a mindful breathing exercise.
- Explain the purpose of this third lesson is to better understand the benefits of composting and foods that help our bodies grow.

****Divide the class into 2 groups****

Split the students into two groups. Send one group with the helper/teacher to the nutrition activity. Take the other group to the garden activity. Both activities will run simultaneously for a total of 20 minutes. Switch groups after 10 minutes.

GARDEN: DISCUSSION & ACTIVITY (10 Minutes)

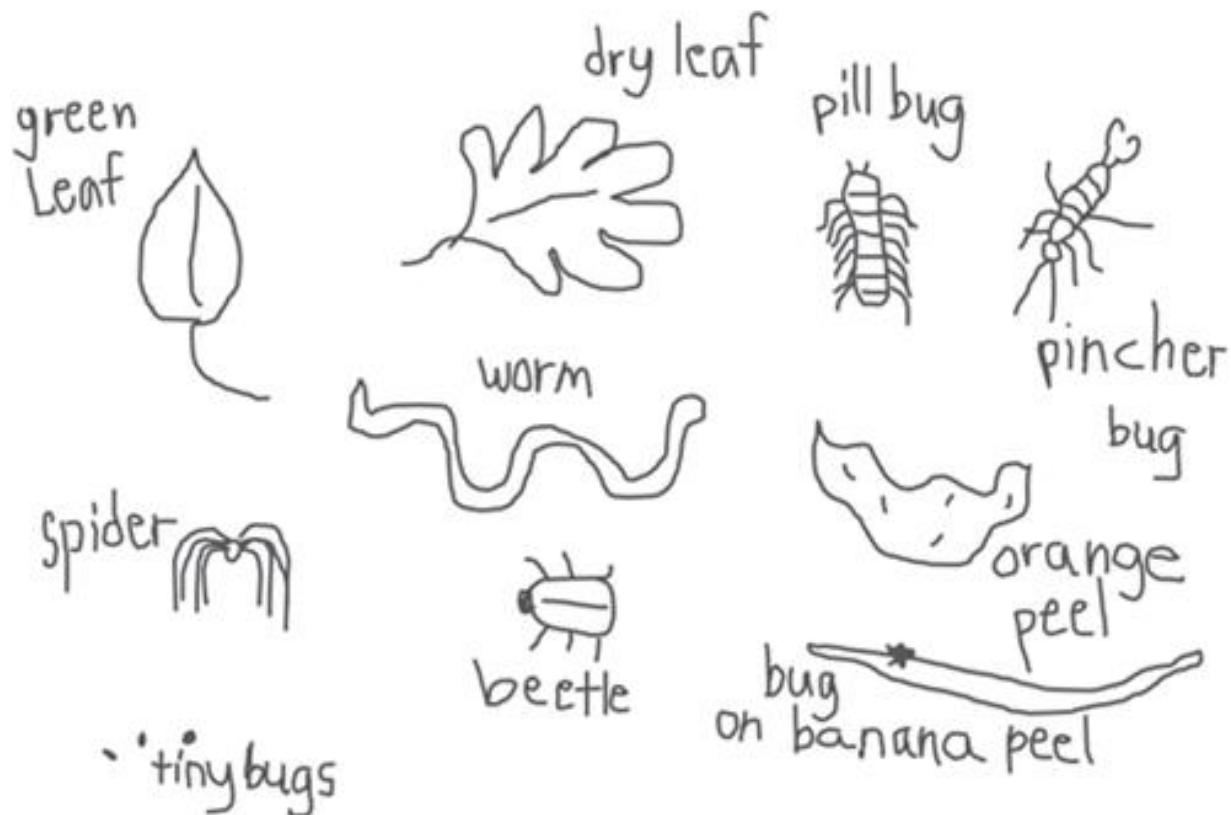
Discussion: Soil Health
<p><u>What Is “Soil Health”?</u></p> <p>Soil health means soil is alive and able to do its job. Healthy soil helps plants grow and provides nutritious food for people and animals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil does some very important jobs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It secures plants in the ground. ○ It holds water for plants ○ It is home to worms, bugs, and tiny living helpers. • It is important to take care of our soil so it can keep growing food season after season. • In the garden, we care for soil by adding compost to it. • When we take care of the soil, the soil takes care of us.
<p>Discussion: Composting</p> <p>Laminate - <i>“Decomposers in the Compost Pile”</i></p> <p><u>What is “Composting”?</u></p> <p>Composting is how we turn old plant scraps into food for the soil.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It happens in a compost bin. • Decomposers are tiny living things that break down old plants. • As plants break down, nutrients (plant food) are released into the soil. • Without decomposers, old plants would just pile up.

Activity: "Compost Observation"Book: *Compost Stew*

- Show the example drawing with decomposers, greens, and browns labeled.
- Show students the compost trays and explain the compost came from their school garden.
- Students observe compost using magnifying lenses.
- If space is limited, rotate small groups every 1–2 minutes.
- Students that are waiting will draw a compost pile.

After observing, students add what they saw to their drawing.

- Help students label:
 - Plant pieces
 - Soil
 - Decomposer
- Encourage drawing simple items such as leaves, food scraps, or worms.
- Read or show pages from the *Compost Stew* book while students wait.

Sample Drawing:

Take photos of drawings to share with BCHD: Mishell.balzer@bchd.org

NUTRITION: DISCUSSION & ACTIVITY (10 Minutes)*** Occurs at the same time as Garden Activities***Discussion: Whole Foods**Supplies: *Food Cards*

- Just like soil needs food, people do too.
 - Food helps our bodies grow strong and gives us energy to play and learn.
 - Some foods help our bodies more than others.
 - Today we are going to identify foods that help our bodies grow strong.
- Show Food Cards.
 - Ask: What do you notice about these foods?
- These foods are called **whole foods**.
- Whole foods look the same, or almost the same, as they do in nature.
- Whole foods come from plants or animals.
- Whole foods help our bodies grow strong.
 - Ask: Can you name a whole food fruit?
 - Ask: Can you name a whole food vegetable?

Activity: Whole Foods Go!

(Played like Red Light, Green Light)

- Today we are going to practice our whole foods knowledge by playing a game called “Whole Foods Go!”
- Line up students in a straight line (side by side) facing the volunteer.
- Stand a running distance away.
- Explain how to play:
 - The volunteer will call out the name of a food.
 - If the food is a whole food, students take one step forward.
 - If the food is not a whole food, students stay where they are.
- The goal is for students to listen carefully and recognize whole foods.

CLOSING (1 Minute)

- Regroup students and reinforce that composting is easy and can be done at home.
- Visit the garden bed before returning to class.
- Thank teacher and volunteers; dismiss class.

***Don't forget to report your lesson as delivered with the online form!**

From your phone, scan this QR code below to report lessons as delivered. Once the page opens, select the 'grid view'. From the computer, click the link [LiveWell Kids Tracking Links 2025-26](https://www.bchd.org/LiveWellKidsTrackingLinks2025-26)

