



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”
 - Laminated: *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

What Is "Soil Health"?

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.

- Soil does some very important jobs:
 - 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.

Discussion: Composting

Laminate - *"Decomposers in the Compost Pile"*

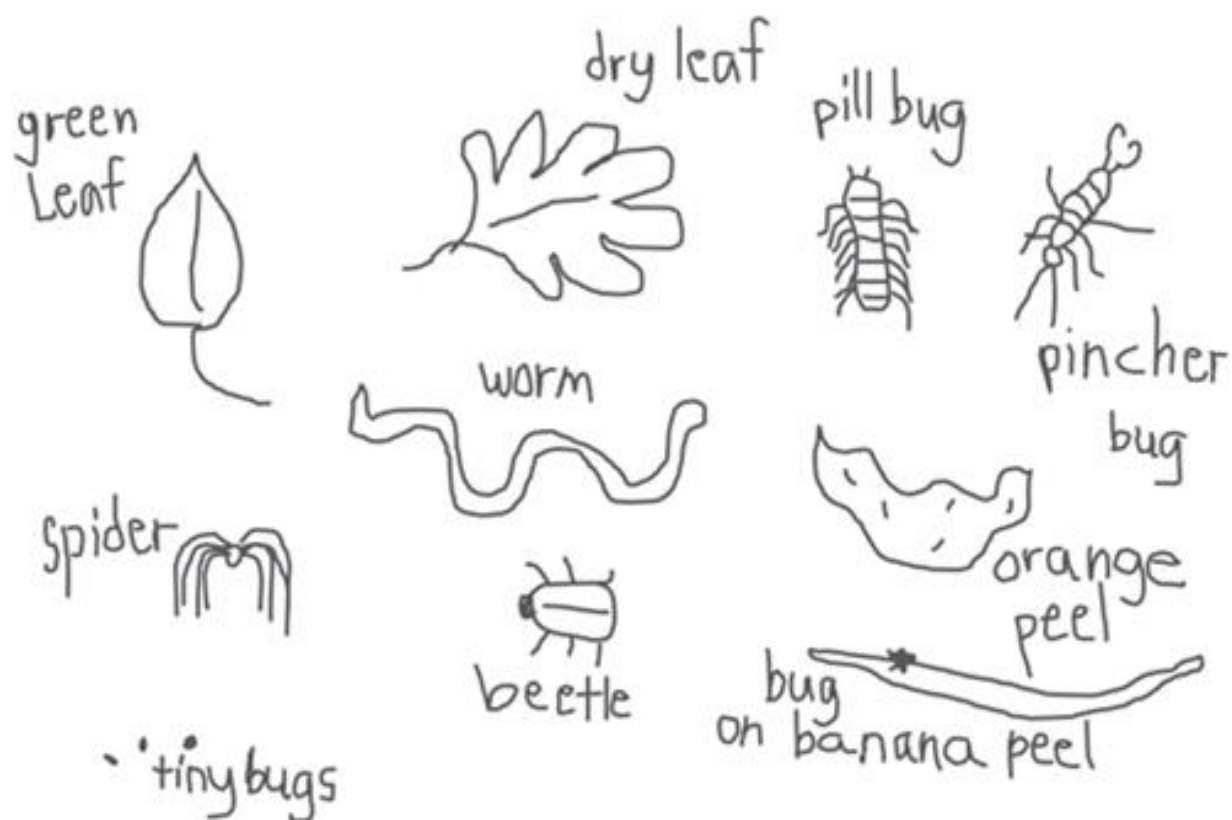
What is "Composting"?

Composting is how we turn old plant scraps into food for the soil.

- 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](#)

