

# FARM2SCHOOL @HOME

## Composting at Home



A learning resource provided by:  
[FarmToSchoolCollective.org](http://FarmToSchoolCollective.org)





## Objective

In this lesson, learners will use food scraps and compost to reduce food waste. Learners will understand how composting can improve the growth of plants.

## Materials



- Ziplock bag, plastic food container, or empty liter soda bottle
- Spoon for measuring
- Food waste or scraps (fruit/vegetable peels, fruit pits, nut shells, coffee grounds/filters, newspaper, or paper towels)
- Dried leaves or sawdust
- Soil
- Water
- Straw (optional)

## Steps Of The Lesson

### 1. Engage

Explain: Composting is when organic matter, such as food scraps, is decomposed or broken down to use as fertilizer or nutrition for other plants.

Ask learner: Why is composting important? Why is it better to compost instead of throwing food scraps away?

Explain: When food scraps are thrown in the trash, they end up in the landfill. As food scraps decompose in the landfill, they release harmful greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change. When food scraps are composted, they breakdown and create a nutrient rich compost that can be used to grow more food!

### 2. Create Your Compost

- 1) Open your container and begin by filling it with a spoonful or two of soil.
- 2) Next, add in your dried leaves or sawdust. This will serve as our “browns” or items with a high carbon content. Carbon-rich ingredients supply energy, absorb excess moisture, and keep the compost pile aerated and structured.
- 3) Next, add in your food waste or scraps. This will serve as our “greens” or items with a high nitrogen content. Nitrogen-rich ingredients supply nutrients and moisture to the compost pile.
- 4) Add some water to the mix, not so much that it becomes liquid, but just enough so the mixture feels like a sponge.
- 5) Close the container leaving or creating a small opening where you can insert the straw (poke small holes if a straw is not available). This is essential so that the mixture can obtain oxygen.

### 3. Explain

Explain what is happening in the compost pile! The materials are breaking down due to the presence of bacteria, microorganisms, insects, and fungus. These decomposers are feeding off the nutrients from the “greens” in the compost. This breakdown or “decomposing” of material creates a lot of energy that you may be able to observe or feel through steam, condensation, or heat in the container.

### 4. Use Your Compost

Lastly, leave the bag of soon-to-be compost out and watch as your items begin to decompose. You may notice mold or fungus forming or even some small flies gathering around it. This all part of the process! Once decomposed, add and spread a 1 inch layer of the nutrient-rich compost to your garden soil, or in a green space near you. The plants will thank you!