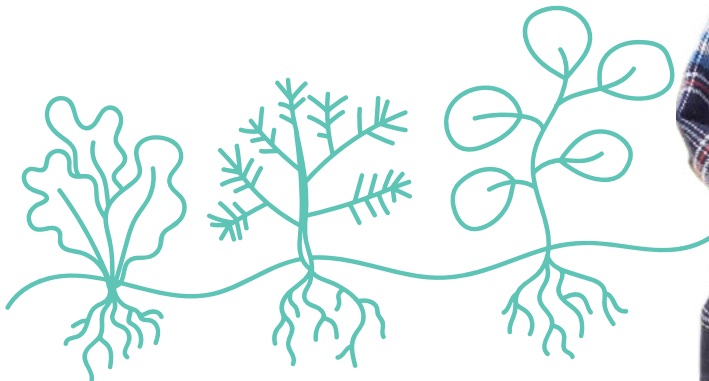


# Tackle Food Waste with Worms

Nourishing the soil with vermicomposting

There are hundreds of ways to prevent food waste in your home and community. But no matter how good we are at not wasting food, there will always be food scraps that can't be eaten—at least not by us! However, worms love to eat apple cores, pea shells, pepper stems and all kinds of organic material that we don't like to eat.

Composting with worms is called *vermicomposting*. And what the worms poop out is called *worm castings*, which make fresh, nutrient-rich soil. Worms are a sign of healthy soil so pay attention whenever you dig.



**WORMS!**

# Understanding avoidable and unavoidable food waste

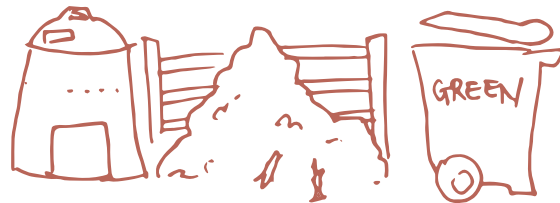
The first step to vermicomposting is knowing which foods can be eaten and which can be composted. To prevent food waste, it is important to know what foods can still be eaten and what should be composted.

## Edible and Inedible Food Waste

Which items can be eaten and which are for compost?



## Compost



**Wait! There are some tricks...** [broccoli stalks](#)<sup>39</sup>, [watermelon rinds](#)<sup>40</sup>, [onion skins](#)<sup>41</sup> and [corn cobs](#)<sup>42</sup> can all be made into delicious and nutritious meals. In Activity #6, learn all about preparing commonly tossed food parts like orange peels.

# Vermicomposting Making Compost With the Help of Worms

Estimated time: 2 hours

## You'll Need:

- A plastic tub with a screen or air holes in the lid
- Newspaper
- Coffee grounds, apple cores or other food scraps
- Red wiggler worms (*Eisenia fetida*). You can order these worms online or ask someone with a vermicompost bin to share theirs with you. They will reproduce, but the more you start with, the more food scraps they'll eat right away.

## Making it Happen:

- Shred newspaper and spray it with water to make a soft, moist environment for your worms.
- Feed your worms small pieces of inedible food waste. They like banana peels, carrot tops, avocado skins and most kinds of raw food scraps. They don't like acidic foods like oranges and lemons or strong-smelling foods like onions and chili peppers.
- Feed your worms daily, and keep newspaper moist by spraying with water.

## Want to do More?

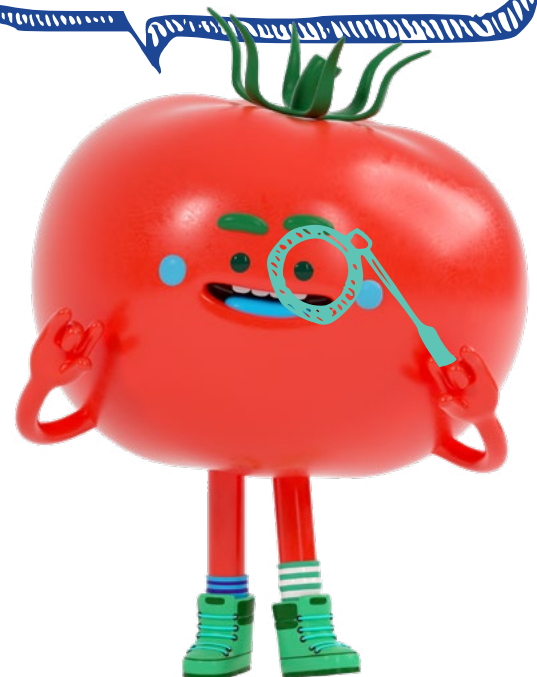
- Learn more about vermicomposting and fun projects to do with your worms.<sup>43</sup>
- Are you ready to take your composting to the next level? See Activity #18 to learn how to build an outdoor composter—it can compost much more food than your vermicompost bin.

**CLAIM**  
10 Systems Thinker points



### Did you know?

Worms eat half their body weight daily. A bin containing 500 grams of worms will eat 250 grams of food scraps every day.<sup>44</sup>



**CLAIM**  
10 Systems Thinker points

<sup>39</sup>According to Elle (2013). Cooking broccoli stalks. <<https://www.accordingtoelle.com/broccoli-stems-as-healthy-as-the-florets/>>

<sup>40</sup>A Taste of Home (2018). Watermelon Rind Pickles. <<https://www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/watermelon-rind-pickles/>>

<sup>41</sup>Farmers Almanac (2018). 10 Good Reasons to Save Those Onion and Garlic Skins. <<https://www.farmersalmanac.com/uses-onion-garlic-skins-30580>>

<sup>42</sup>Wide Open Eats (2018). Your Bare Corn Cobs Have 7 More Ways to Help you in the Kitchen. <<https://www.wideopeneats.com/corn-cobs-use/>>

<sup>43</sup>Recipe for Success (2014). In our garden: Vermiculture (Worm Composting) with Kids. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t3s9US4cl20>>

<sup>44</sup>Worm Composting Headquarters. <<https://wormcompostinghq.com/feeding-your-worms/>>

