

# Youth Action Kit

Did you know that about one third of  
all food produced for people around  
the world goes to waste?  
This is a huge amount, as big as a  
mountain!

Food waste is what happens in our homes and  
in stores, restaurants, schools and communities  
when we throw out perfectly good food. There's  
nothing wrong with this food, but it's ending up  
in the landfill, instead of our stomachs, because  
of decisions we make.

It's time to make that  
mountain smaller, and  
you can help at home  
or at school!

Here you'll find  
activities to do  
with your family or  
classmates!



COMMISSION FOR  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
COOPERATION

#ShrinkFoodWaste

#FoodMattersActionKit

Each year, the food we waste costs the North American economy \$278 Billion US dollars and could have fed 260 Million people

## This is what else we waste when we waste food

39 million m<sup>3</sup>  
of landfill space, equivalent to



13 football stadiums,  
gets used up with our food waste each year

193 million

tonnes of greenhouse  
gases emitted needlessly,  
the same as driving

41 million

cars continuously for  
a whole year



\$1.9 billion

US dollars in wasted tipping fees

Over 32 million hectares

of wildlife habitat is lost to farmland to grow food  
that is never eaten, in the United States alone



Enough water to fill

7 million  
Olympic-sized  
swimming pools  
(18 Billion m<sup>3</sup>)

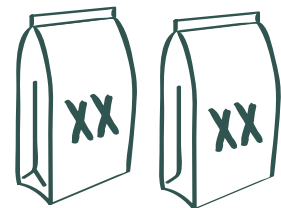
Enough energy to power

274 million Homes

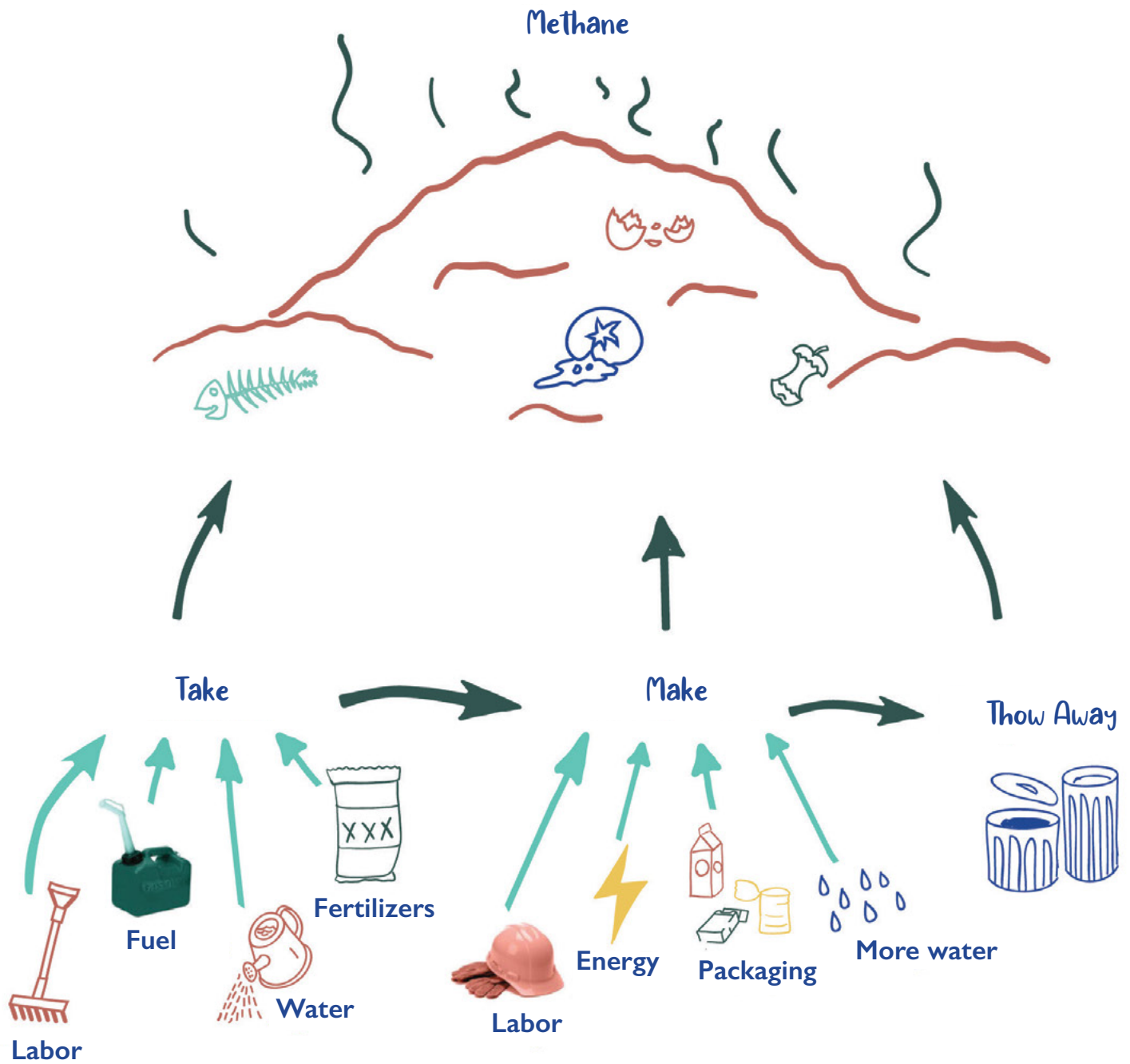


3.9 million

tonnes of fertilizer



# Linear food system



# Growing Food

Grow food, don't waste it



The food that we see in the grocery store comes to us from all around the world. Have you ever wondered what the food journey looks like?

Let's consider the journey of a single strawberry. It begins as a seed and relies on water, sunlight and good weather conditions to grow into a plant. Because they are so delicate, strawberries are picked by hand, then sorted by

size, color and shape. Some strawberries make the cut but many don't. Those that do are packaged and shipped, often traveling thousands of kilometers before they get onto our table. So, if we waste even a single strawberry, we are wasting all of the energy that went into getting it into our hands.

## Companion Planting—Growing Food with Friends!

**Time:** 30 mins

**Nurturing:** 12-16 weeks

Some plants grow well together; these are called companion plants. The Three Sisters: corn, beans and squash, for example, have been grown together by Indigenous communities across North America for thousands of years.

Corn grows tall and provides a stalk for beans to climb. Beans return important nutrients to the soil as they grow, and squash shades the ground with her broad leaves to keep weeds from moving in. Research combinations of companion plants. Experiment with watering, light and adding compost. Some plants will grow faster than others—watch and see what you can learn.



*Three sisters*





## You'll Need:

- Seeds (cucumber, beans, tomatoes, squash—seek plants that grow well together and plan to plant in groups once your plants are big enough to move outside)
- Soil
- Small cups or newspaper to fold into pots
- Sunlight

## Making it Happen:

1. If you do this activity in class, research crop associations to know what plants grow well together and decide what groups to make when transplanting. If you're at home, ask your parents or grandparents if they know anything about the three sisters: corn, beans and squash, and ask them to help you with the activity. **Write down your chosen association in your reserved workspace in this booklet.**
2. Fill pots or cups and gently with soil.
3. Check your seeds.
4. Place a seed in each pot.
5. Label your pot with the planting date and put it on a tray or plastic lid to catch excess water, next to a sunny window.. **Write down the planting dates in your reserved workspace.**
6. Water lightly.
7. Place in a sunny window.
8. Check soil every day.
9. Track your plants' growth, leaf color and soil texture.
10. When your plants are big enough and all danger of frost has passed, transplant your plants in their companion groups outside to a sunny location, grouping them by crop associations, this can be in your can be your backyard, the schoolyard, or a much bigger pot so they all fit.

## What did you Learn?

- Did you see how your companion plants supported each other?
- What strategies helped or hindered the growth of your plant?
- What did you learn? What would you do differently next time?
- Did you feel a connection with your plant? If so, how did that change the way you think about food?



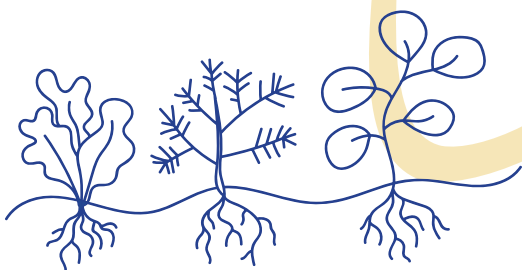
# Activity #1 workspace: "Growing Food"

1. If you do this activity in class, research crop associations to know what plants grow well together and decide what groups to make when transplanting. If you're at home, ask your parents or grandparents if they know anything about the three sisters: corn, beans and squash, and ask them to help you with the activity. **Write down your chosen association here.**

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2. Fill pots or cups and gently with soil.
  3. Check your seeds. What shape and color are they? Can you imagine how these hard, dry seeds will transform into full plants and grow food?
  4. Poke a small, two-seed-deep hole in soil. Place one seed in the hole and gently cover with soil.
  5. Label your pots with the plant date and put it on a tray or plastic lid to catch excess water. **Write down the planting dates here.**

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6. Water lightly—too much water can wash away your seed's soil.
  7. Place your pots in a sunny window.
  8. Check soil every day, keeping it moist but not soggy. **Write down the watering days here so you don't forget or overwater.**

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday



9. Track your plants' growth, leaf color and soil texture. **Write it down here.**

Plant 1	Plant 2	Plant 3

10. When your plants are big enough and all danger of frost has passed, transplant your plants in their companion groups outside to a sunny location. *This can be your backyard, the schoolyard, or a much bigger pot so they all fit.*

# What did you Learn?

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# Preserving Food knowledge

Learn techniques from your elders to reduce food waste

## How History Helps us Prevent Food Waste

Re-learning ancient ways to cook, preserve and manage foods can help us prevent food waste and become master chefs. Learning from elders in your community will teach you cool tips and help preserve knowledge and recipes that will help reduce food waste for generations to come.

Do your grandparents have a delicious recipe made out of leftovers or salvaged food? Or maybe they know how to use every single part of a vegetable or animal. This is your opportunity to find out!

## Sharing Stories, Preserving Food

Time: 3-5 days

### You'll Need:

- Paper and pen
- You also can record the interview or take a photograph with your phone



Amazing Recipe!



## Making it Happen:

1. Find an Elder to interview.
2. Prepare the questions you would like to ask, along with the material you need (paper, phone, etc.).
3. After your interview, think about what you learnt.

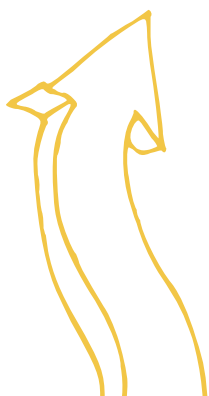
## Sample Interview Questions (write down the answers on your reserved workspace in this booklet):

- A. Do you think people waste more food now than in the past?
- B. Are there foods that you used to eat, or parts of foods that were used before, that are now commonly wasted? Why does this happen now; what has changed?
- C. Do you have strategies to prevent food waste by transforming ingredients or leftovers into a meal?
- D. What dishes do you make where no food is wasted? How did you learn to make this dish?
- E. When you were young, what was done with food scraps that weren't eaten?
- F. Are there cultural or spiritual traditions that influence your opinion on food and food waste?



## Want to do more?

- **Cookbook:** Compile a cookbook of zero food waste family recipes. Include family stories and descriptions and any techniques you learned.
- **Cook together:** Set a time with the elder(s) you interviewed to cook together. Pledge to master some of their cooking techniques and share a picture of you cooking together.



# Activity #2 workspace - “Preserving Food Knowledge”

1. Find an Elder to interview. This could be a relative or a neighbor.
2. Prepare questions you would like to ask.
3. Ask permission to record the interview and take a photograph. If you are part of a university or school, check if there is an informed consent template that you should use for your interview.
4. Be prepared: check your recorder or charge your phone or computer. Bring a pen and paper or computer to take notes.
5. Do the interview in a comfortable and quiet space.
6. After your interview, ask yourself: What did I learn from this elder? How can I apply what I learned about the past to my own food practices today?



## Sample interview questions:

- A. Do you think people waste more food now than in the past?
- B. Are there foods that you used to eat, or parts of foods that were used before, that are now commonly wasted? Why does this happen now; what has changed?

C. Do you have strategies to prevent food waste by transforming ingredients or leftovers into a meal?

D. What dishes do you make where no food is wasted? How did you learn to make this dish?

E. When you were young, what was done with food scraps that weren't eaten?

F. Are there cultural or spiritual traditions that influence your opinion on food and food waste?



# Let's All Shrink Food Waste Mountain!

Save food.  
Save the planet.

Share your work and these activities with  
your family, friends and classmates. Show  
them what you've done!

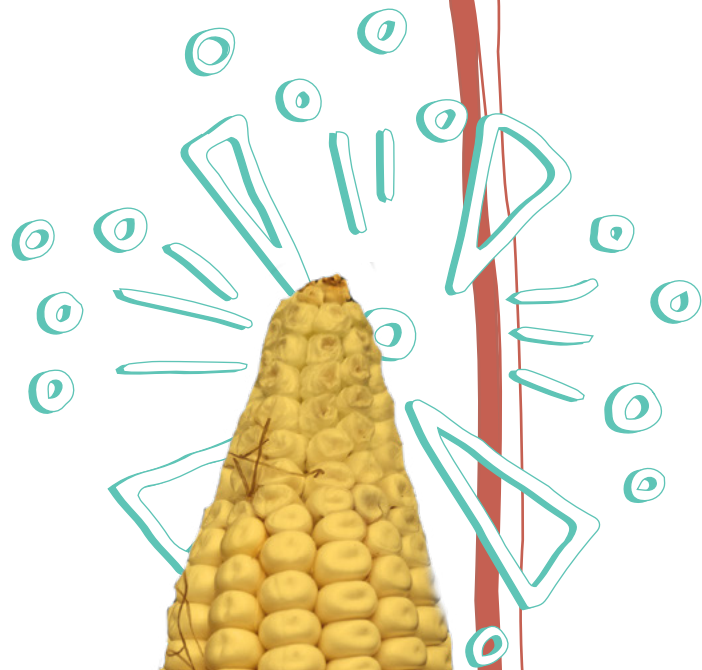
You can watch our videos for other activities  
here:

<http://www.cec.org/flwy/>

Become a Young Food Hero! Sign up today with  
your family, or teacher and classmates!

<http://www.cec.org/flwy/join-the-youth-movement/>

Plus, share news and photos about your  
achievements with everyone in the anti-food  
waste community.



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