Grow On!

Newsletter for MG SPROUTS Families

Session Three: Compost Stew

Dear _____:

Today I learned all about compost stew! I learned about all the things we can put in a compost pile rather than in our garbage. This is good for the earth, since we can add compost to our garden and plants. Even earthworms like compost! I bet they especially like _____.

We learned how to make a potting soil for growing plants. Good soil needs to provide nutrients to plants, hold a reasonable amount of water, but let the plants roots have the oxygen and space they need to grow.

We made potting soil. It was fun to mix and stir all the dirt together. Perlite looks like popcorn, but it helps the potting soil to drain.

Thanks for taking me to SPROUTS!

Love,

_____ (name)

I had a lot of fun today at MG SPROUTS! I am looking forward to coming to the next session

_____

We are learning about recycling and reusing. Can we find and bring an empty 2L plastic bottle and a smaller 20oz juice bottle for next session?

I have some journal sheets to work on before then. I can look in our garden for ideas to draw and write about!

Composting

Soils can often be improved and made more productive by simply mixing organic matter with them. For many years, the most popular source of organic matter for soil improvement has been well-rotted farm manure, which is now less available, especially for the urban gardener. Today's gardeners should be aware of cheaper and more readily available sources of organic residues. These include plant materials from their own homes and yards, such as grass clippings, scraps of vegetable materials, small twigs, and especially fall leaves. To become useable soil amendments, these materials should undergo a degree of decomposition brought about by certain bacteria and fungi (microbes).

The process by which gardeners convert organic matter for use is called composting, and the useable material is referred to as compost. The practice of applying materials such as compost, leaves, or grass clippings to the soil surface to modify soil temperature and moisture, and control weeds and soil erosion is called mulching.

For more information about how to compost, see UGA Cooperative Extension Publication, Composting and Mulching (C 816), available online at http://extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.cfm?number=C816

MG SPROUTS

Horticulture Activities for Kids

MG Sprouts Horticulture Activities for Kids. © UGA Extension

Tips for Maintaining a Septic System

- Have the tank inspected and pumped periodically, ideally every three to seven years.
- Do not drive or park over the tank or drainfield.
- Do not use sinks or toilets as trashcans.
- Garbage disposals increase the need for routine pumping.
- Consider the septic system in the landscape design.
- Use water wisely.
- Do not use additives.

Excerpted from UGA Extension Publication *A Beginner's Guide to Septic Systems* (B1421) available online at http://tinyurl.com/septicforbeginners

Parents: Here are some additional ideas for discussion and journaling activities to use at home to help your child begin the process of inquiry. Scientific inquiry involves making observations, asking questions, sorting, comparing, counting, describing, making predictions and using all of these activities in building awareness of the world. Please return the *Where I Live and Play: Soil* sheet with your child at the next SPROUTS Session. We often use these for group activity sharing and they will be placed in the My SPROUTS Journal binder at the final session, along with new sheets for future use after SPROUTS is complete.

My SPROUTS Journal ideas...

What kinds of things could you get from the kitchen and put in a compost pile?

What kinds of things could you compost from your yard or garden?

How would you use compost in your gardens?

Draw a picture of all the living organisms in the soil. How do they relate?

About Georgia 4-H

Georgia 4-H is a world in which youth and adults learn, grow, and work together as catalysts for positive change!

The mission of Georgia 4-H is to assist youth in acquiring knowledge, developing life skills, and forming attitudes that will enable them to become self-directing, productive and contributing members of society. This mission is accomplished through "hands-on" learning experiences, focused on agricultural and environmental issues; agriculture awareness; leadership; communication skills; foods and nutrition; health; energy conservation; and citizenship.

Exploring and discovering, encouraging and challenging, that's what Georgia 4-H is all about. As a program of the University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Cooperative Extension System, 4-H is part of the nationwide Extension network.

4-H'ers are known for sharing their research-based knowledge and technology with people where they live and work. 4-H combines federal, state, and local expertise and resources.

In Georgia, Extension faculty members based on the campus of the University of Georgia and in most Georgia counties work directly with adult and teen volunteer leaders to implement the 4-H program at the local level. For more information about Georgia 4-H, contact your local county Extension Office or the Georgia State 4-H Office.

If your child enjoyed Compost Stew, may we suggest:

Yucky Worms: Read and Wonder
by Vivian French ISBN-13: 978-0763658175

The University of Georgia, Fort Valley State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and counties of the state cooperating. UGA Extension offers educational programs, assistance and materials to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, age, gender or disability.

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