



# From Garbage to the Garden

The earth loves it when we recycle! Nature recycles too. When things in nature die, they start to decay or rot. The product of this natural decay is called compost. **Composting is turning these dead plants into nutrients for the soil.** It's



a great way to help the environment grow and stay healthy! Compost helps new plants grow and thrive. For instance, a dead tree decaying on the forest floor provides a perfect home for a new sapling to grow.

## Compost at Home

We can recycle our own organic waste by composting at home. Instead of throwing leftover food and yard waste into a trashcan, you can compost it. When it's done rotting, you can add it to your garden where it will help you grow yummy fruits and vegetables that you can eat! To compost at home you mix leftover food and yard clippings into piles outside. These are called compost piles.



## What is Compostable?

Organic material includes plants that were once alive and are now decomposing or rotting. Leftover food items like banana peels and apple cores are all organic matter. **Garden** waste such as leaves, twigs, and grass clippings are also compostable. A healthy compost pile will contain a good balance of both food and

yard waste. All this decomposable stuff is eaten by what composters call the **FBI**. That stands for fungus, bacteria, and invertebrates. Invertebrates (critters without backbones) that do this important job are millipedes, snails and worms.

## Benefits of Composting

Compost keeps our topsoil healthy in different ways. Compost adds form or structure to the topsoil so it doesn't blow away with the wind or wash away with water. Compost also aerates, or adds air to the soil, which allows water to sink in and reach plant roots. If you have ever dug in the dirt, you know it is difficult to do when the dirt is dry and hard. Since most plants can't grow in dry, hard dirt, compost adds air and water to topsoil making it soft and moist and easier for plants to grow. By providing moisture, air, and nutrients to the soil, compost makes topsoil arable, or able to grow food! Composting helps keep our earth healthy by taking waste and turning it into something useful. Compost allows us to grow yummy food to eat, and it helps cool plants, roots and keeps soil moist.



For more information on building compost piles, call the Recycling Hot Line, 625-6800, to request free brochures. Better yet – come to the Compost Fair on April 27 (information in Calendar inside) to see piles in action and talk to Master Composter/Recyclers.



Want to compost at home?  
It's as simple as 1, 2, 3!

\*Be sure to ask your parent for help!\*

- 1) Build a container to hold your compost. It should be at least 3x3x3 feet.
  - Add compost materials (food and yard scraps).
  - Add water to keep pile moist as a wrung out sponge.

- 2) For a hot, active compost pile, turn the materials with a pitchfork every week (this helps the air get to organisms that are working to decompose your pile). You can also just let your pile sit – it will just take longer to decompose.

- 3) Insert a compost thermometer into the pile for a few minutes weekly to monitor your pile. When the pile reaches 150 degrees F, it is time to turn, and then watch while it heats up again. The more times you turn it and allow it to heat up again, the quicker it all turns to useful compost. Now watch your pile rot, and record observations on a worksheet like the one on page 3.

## Fun Facts

- Arbor Day was created to encourage people to plant and care for trees.
- There are over 23,000 kinds of trees on the earth!
- The world's largest tree is a Coast Redwood in northern California's Redwood National Park. It is 369 feet tall and over 2,000 years old!
- 33% of America is covered by forests.
- There are two main kinds of trees: *deciduous* - change color and lose their leaves in the fall; and *conifers* - keep their leaves (or needles) and color throughout the year.
- Sugar Maple trees create a sap in the spring that we harvest and process to make maple syrup.



## Plant Your Own!

Tree planting is one of the most popular activities people do on Earth Day and Arbor Day!

Why is planting trees so important? Did you know that trees help clean the air? Trees catch fine particle pollution like dust and smoke from the air. Trees also give us oxygen to breathe and absorb carbon dioxide. Trees also give us shade (which keeps us cooler in the summertime), and gives animals a place to live.



## Community Calendar

### April

- 6 **47th Annual Buttercup Hike**  
Camp Caro - Dishman Hills  
12 p.m. - 2 p.m., meet in lower parking lot  
[www.dishmanhills.org](http://www.dishmanhills.org)
- 20 **Earth Day - Downtown Spokane**  
Main St. between Division & Browne  
9 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
[www.earthdayspokane.org](http://www.earthdayspokane.org)

Members can earn 5 points per event, by participating in the kids club activity!

- 27 **Arbor Day & Compost Fair**  
Finch Arboretum, 3404 W Woodland Blvd.  
11 a.m. - 2 p.m.  
[www.solidwaste.org](http://www.solidwaste.org)
- 27 **Kidical Mass Bike Ride**  
West Central Community Center  
1 p.m. start  
[www.summerparkways.com/kidical-mass/](http://www.summerparkways.com/kidical-mass/)

### May

- 18 **Floods, Flowers and Feathers Festival**  
Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge  
8 a.m. - 3 p.m., \$3 per car entrance fee  
[www.fws.gov/refuge/turnbull](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/turnbull)
- 18 **Kidical Mass Bike Ride**  
Chief Garry Neighborhood  
1 p.m. start  
[www.summerparkways.com/kidical-mass/](http://www.summerparkways.com/kidical-mass/)

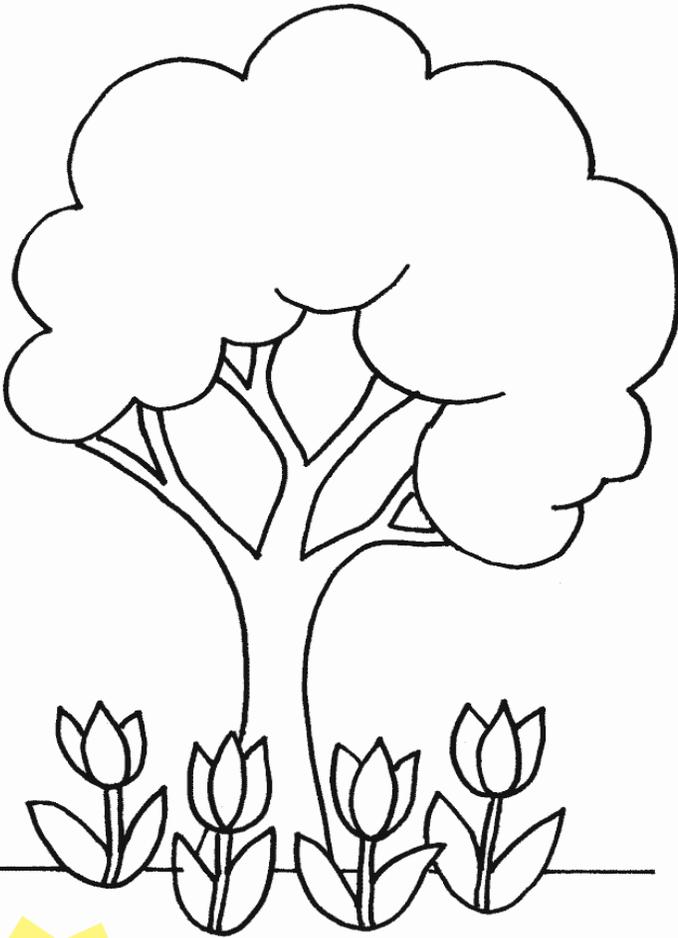
### June

- 19 **Summer Parkways Bike Ride**  
Manito Park  
6 p.m. - 9 p.m.  
[www.summerparkways.com](http://www.summerparkways.com)
- 29, 30 **Hoopfest 3-on-3 Tournament**  
Downtown Spokane  
All Day, participation fee  
[www.spokanehoopfest.com](http://www.spokanehoopfest.com)

### July

- 4 **Independence Day Festival**  
Riverfront Park, All Day

## Spring color into this picture!



Members can earn 5 points by completing each activity on this page!

## Compost Pile Observations

(Write what you see, feel, smell, and hear. What is the weather like? Use a thermometer to take the temperature of the compost pile.)

Week 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Weather: \_\_\_\_\_ Temp.: \_\_\_\_\_

Week 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Weather: \_\_\_\_\_ Temp.: \_\_\_\_\_

Week 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Weather: \_\_\_\_\_ Temp.: \_\_\_\_\_

Week 4: \_\_\_\_\_

Weather: \_\_\_\_\_ Temp.: \_\_\_\_\_

## Fill in the B L A N K S!

Hint: If you are having a hard time figuring out what the missing words are, the sentence can be found on the first page!

1. Composting is T \_\_\_\_\_ these D \_\_\_\_\_ plants into N \_\_\_\_\_ for the soil.

2. Write the answers from #1 in the spaces below:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Use the circled letters to answer this question:

Q: Where can you find delicious fruits and vegetables to eat?

A: \_\_\_\_\_

Hint: The answer can also be found on the first page!



## EnviroKids' Club

EnviroKids' Club  
c/o Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency  
3104 E. Augusta Ave.  
Spokane, WA 99207

PRSRRT STD  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Spokane, WA  
Permit No. 722

### See inside for Activity Details!

Members can earn 5 points  
by completing each special  
EnviroKids' activity that is  
marked with a gold star!

## EnviroKids'... caring for the Earth

EnviroKids' Club provides its 200+ members with information and activities to explore aspects of the environment: air, water, weather, garbage and recycling, plants and animals. The Club is open to all Spokane County residents who are in grades K-6.

Club members receive a newsletter in the mail four times a year. The newsletter contains activities to complete and ideas for activities at home or in the community. Members who are interested can complete activities and/or participate in some of the events to earn points. Earned points can then be used to trade-in for prizes. **Members need to participate in at least one activity per year to receive newsletters.** For more information, visit [www.spokaneenvirokids.org](http://www.spokaneenvirokids.org).

**To earn points, mail your completed activities by June 30, 2013 to:**

EnviroKids' Club c/o National Weather Service  
2601 N. Rambo Rd. Spokane, WA 99224

Fill in this form with the activities page complete and send it back to us to earn your points! Do you have a friend or sibling who would like to join Envirokids' Club? Copy this page for them to send in and be added to our mailing list.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

My child has permission to participate in EnviroKids' Club activities that I accompany him/her to and permission is granted to use his/her photo that may be taken at such event, for promoting the Club (newsletter, flyers, ads, website, etc.)

Parent Signature. Please print name, then sign and date

*EnviroKids' Club Partners: National Weather Service, Spokane Aquifer Joint Board, Spokane Conservation District, Spokane County Water Resources, Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency, and Spokane Regional Solid Waste System.*

*Printed on recycled paper. Printing and mailing provided by Spokane Regional Solid Waste System with partial grant funding from WA State Dept. of Ecology.*