

Track 5: Soil, Worms and Insects

Featured Lessons

- Soil•
- Worms and Worm Bins•
- Decomposition and Decomposers•
- Insects: Pollinator, Predator, Pest, and Parasite•
- Plant Protection•
- Plant Predators•

Overview

In this section, students will investigate the living and non-living components of soil in order to better understand why soil is so important for all living things to survive. They will learn about decomposition and one decomposer in detail: a worm. By setting up and keeping a classroom worm bin, the students will gain an understanding of how they can compost their food scraps to make nutritious soil rather than throwing them away. Additionally, students will compare and contrast worms with insects, learning how their bodies are different. Students will be able to distinguish between 4 types of insects in the orchard who have important roles – pollinators, predators, pests, and parasites – and how each is important to the schoolyard ecosystem. Lastly, they will learn about how plants protect themselves from insects and how to find signs of insect predation in the orchard.

Encouraged Lessons from Other Tracks

Roots from Parts of a Tree track
Indoor Seed Germination and Ready for Spring from Plant Life Cycle track
Seeds and Galls from the Plant Life Cycle track
Flowers and Pollination from the Plant Life Cycle track
The Ecosystem Game from the Ecosystems, Food Webs and Food Geography track

Stewardship Connections

Once the student worm bin has produced rich soil, it can be used as mulch for the Class Tree or on a schoolyard garden bed to complete the connection to plant and animal life cycles and ecosystems.

Age Range for Lessons

Lessons are most appropriate for students in grades 3-5, though younger students will enjoy constructing and keeping a classroom worm bin and investigating soil composition.



Created by EarthWorks Projects, Inc.

This lesson plan and any accompanying worksheets may be reproduced or shared for educational purposes.