

Composting and Soil Health

Children's Books

List curated by Illinois Food Scrap & Composting Coalition (IFSCC)
2023



Books we share at IFSCC tabling events (linked to full details below):

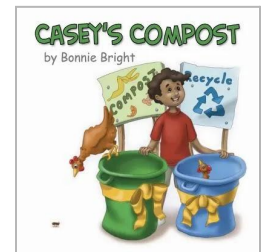
- [Compost, By Gosh: An Adventure with Vermicomposting by Michelle Eva Portman](#)
- [Composting: Nature's Recyclers by Robin Koontz](#)
- [An Environmental Guide from A to Z by Tim Magner](#)
- [Earl the Earthworm Digs for His Life by Tim Magner](#)
- [Kyle in His Compost Pile by Julie Lehman](#)

Casey's Compost by Bonnie Bright

Follow a young boy named Casey as he learns about composting, how it provides nutrition to plants, and how it keeps garbage out of landfills. Supportive adults in his life recognize his passion and help him to make composting a city-wide policy.

ISBN-13: 9781453642207

Ages 4-9 | Pages 43

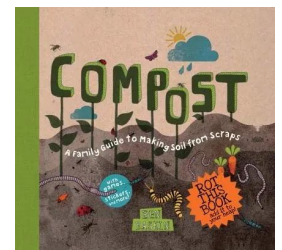


Compost: A Family Guide to Making Soil from Scraps by Ben Raskin

Teach your kids that composting is fun with this funky guide that takes you from the nitty-gritty of compost composition and care to Worms and Ladders, a fresh take on a traditional board game. Find out the rules for setting up your very own Worm Lovers' Society, learn all about the garden-to-plate cycle together, and get your family's feet firmly set on the road to a planet-friendly lifestyle. The book includes information on both kitchen and garden composting. This is a bit more interactive than some of the other books which are non-fiction resources and stories.

ISBN-13: 9781611801279

Ages 3-7 | Pages 48

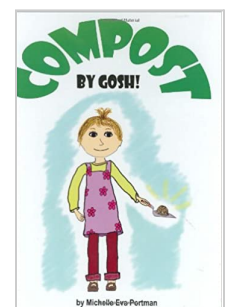


Compost, By Gosh: An Adventure with Vermicomposting by Michelle Eva Portman

Author Michelle Eva Portman presents a wonderful adventure where a young girl and her mom convert a storage box into a house for their new pets. The box becomes a vermicomposting bin and the pets are redworms. Portman's poetic, rhyming couplets provide a grand explanation of the process of vermicomposting in a manner that the youngest reader/listener will enjoy. The story is accompanied by adorable illustrations. The book includes "How To" and "Resources" sections to encourage further exploration of vermicomposting.

ISBN-13: 9780942256161

Ages 4-9 | Pages 42

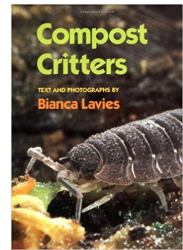


Compost Critters by Bianca Lavies

Nature's recyclers receive a close-up look, in an informative, photographic study, at the creatures, from bacteria and fungi to worms and millipedes, that break down our garbage, returning raw materials to the earth.

ISBN-13: 9780525447634

Ages 9-10 | Pages 32

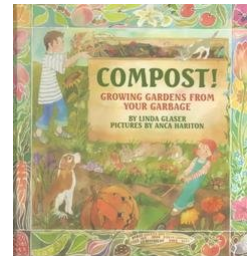


Compost! Growing Gardens From Your Garbage by Linda Glaser

This is a really simple book that follows two young children who walk the reader step-by-step through how they make and use their compost. They discuss all the different things from around their home (like different types of food scraps and yard waste) that they put into their compost. Then they ultimately show how they use the compost in their garden once it's finished. This is a great introduction to composting that doesn't dig into the science or complexities of composting.

ISBN-13: 9781562946593

Ages 4-8 | Pages 32



Composting (Urban Gardening and Farming for Teens) by Brian Hanson-Harding

This interesting and practical guide explains how composting works and how to start composting, including setting up a bin, adding the right mix of ingredients, aerating the pile, and more. Successful school and municipal programs across the country are highlighted as well.

ISBN-13: 9781477717813

Ages 12-17 | Pages 64



Composting and Gardening: Join the Small Steps Revolution Today (Small Steps to Save the World) by Robin Twiddy

Composting and gardening are two ways to help the Earth--and they can be fun too! Readers will learn why composting is better than sending our organic waste to landfills and how growing their own food reduces their carbon footprint, not to mention being totally tasty! Plenty of helpful, and healthful, tips are found in this reader-friendly format with encouraging photographs of young people engaged in Earth-friendly activities. Bright colors and a comic book-design will keep readers motivated and learning how just small steps, when combined, can create a better tomorrow for us all.

ISBN-13: 9781978530324

Ages 8-11 | Pages 32



Composting: Nature's Recyclers by Robin Michal Koontz

This simple book highlights many of the things that one can add to a compost bin. From dead leaves and food scraps to grass clippings and lunch leftovers, tons of small animals and organisms turn this pile of trash into wonderful vitamins for your garden.

ISBN-13: 9781404822009

Ages 5-10 | Pages 24



Compost Stew: An A to Z Recipe for the Earth by Mary McKenna Siddals

Written in the form of a poem, this book is about all the things that can go into a compost bin and how to care for it. Kids learn about what can decompose and nourish the soil instead of continuing to fill our landfills. This book also has really great, colorful pictures.

ISBN-13: 9780385755382

Ages 3-7 | Pages 40

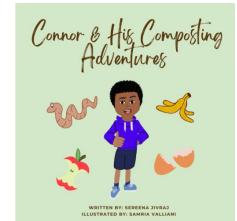


Connor and His Composting Adventures by Sereena Jivraj

Connor is a young boy who learns what compost is. Follow along with Connor to learn what everyday items can be composted and how to prevent trash from ending up in a landfill!

ISBN-13: 9798490019527

Ages 4-12 | Pages 25

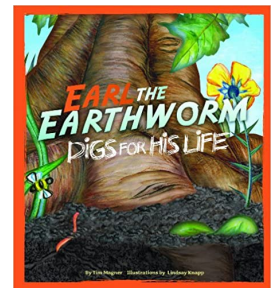


Earl the Earthworm Digs for His Life by Tim Magner

The story about the coming of age of a simple earthworm captures the attention of the youngest reader and won't let go. From the first wiggle, Earl takes us deep into his world and together we explore his surroundings and learn about his connections to nature. Packed with colorful illustrations of bees, grasses and trees, the journey of Earl the Earthworm is as engaging as it is inspiring. To top it off, amazing footnote facts make this instant classic extra entertaining for any child.

ISBN-13: 9780982041758

Ages 5-6 | Pages 32



An Environmental Guide from A to Z by Tim Magner

By examining the elements, habitats, and cycles in nature, An Environmental Guide introduces basic environmental science to elementary school readers. With a compelling narrative and unforgettable images An Environmental Guide brings an awareness of how the world works and encourages kids to explore and connect with nature nearby.

ISBN-13: 9780982041765

Ages 6-8 | Pages 48

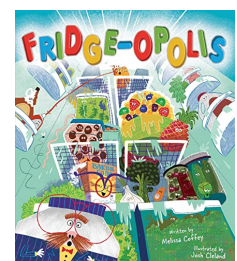


Fridge-opolis by Melissa Coffey

In the jam-packed city of Fridge-opolis, Swiss cheese has turned moldy and bleu. The broccoli is in a bad mood downtown in the crispers. And the Eastside high-rises are full of dressings cloudy with gloom. With the city in chaos, Mayor Mayonnaise calls on Doctor Baking Soda at Undersink Labs for help. Will they be able to save Fridge-opolis from utter rancid ruin?

ISBN-13: 9781499812541

Ages 4-8 | Pages 32



Garbage Dump Disaster by Geronimo Stilton (Geronimo Stilton #79)

Moldy Mozzarella, what was that smell? It was my friend Hercule, and he needed my help. Someone was stealing ... garbage! A rascally rodent had been sneaking into the Recycling Plant and taking their trash. With the help of Flora, the plants owner, Hercule and I try to sniff the rat out of the stench. Can we find the thief before he runs away with all our trash?

ISBN-13: 978-1338756845

Ages 7-10 | Pages 128



Garbage Helps Our Garden Grow: A Compost Story by Linda Glaser

What is that garbage doing next to the garden? It's not garbage. It's compost! Amazing things happen inside a compost bin. In go banana peels, grass clippings, and even an old jack-o'-lantern. Out comes compost. The compost goes into the garden to make the soil rich for new plants. Compost is good for the earth. Composting also helps us make less garbage. In this book, you can watch as one family makes compost for their garden and also learn how to start your very own compost bin!

ISBN-13: 9780761349112

Ages 5-8 | Pages 32



From Garbage to Compost (Start to Finish, Second Series) by Lisa Owings

How does a pile of garbage become compost? Follow each step in the cycle—from collecting kitchen and yard waste to creating compost for your garden—in this fascinating book!

ISBN-13: 9781512412994

Ages 5-9 | Pages 24

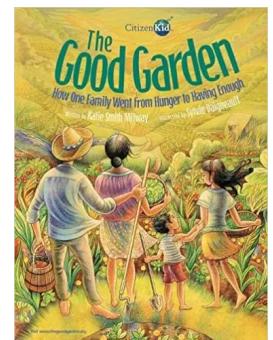


The Good Garden: How One Family Went From Hunger To Having Enough by Katie Smith Milway

One family living in a small village does not have enough food or money, so the father must leave to go find work. The family gets much of their food from a small piece of land next to their home. At school, a new teacher arrives and teaches the older daughter about composting and other practices to increase the health of their soil and the output of their land. These new practices greatly increase the health and wealth of the garden, even giving them enough food to sell some extra items at the market. The money from the extra food is enough that her father no longer has to leave for work and they get plenty of food from their own garden to feed their family. A small change in teaching the local villagers more sustainable farming methods transform the prosperity of their family.

ISBN-13: 9781525304064

Ages 8-12 | Pages 32



Too Good to Waste by Storey Wertheimer and Cassandra Levy

Reed and Rose are twins who love to cook. Reed, a rambunctious boy, enjoys throwing leftover food scraps at his bedroom walls while his sister Rose is eager to clean, throwing away their excess food. But what they and many children don't realize is how much food they waste daily. When their mother introduces them to composting, they learn the power of protecting the environment--and so do you!

ISBN-13: 9798620364695

Ages 4-8 | Pages 37



The Great Compost Heap by Renae Smith

This book encourages children to reduce, reuse, and recycle by composting. It shows readers that they can use composting to create a cleaner environment and take better care of the Earth.

ISBN-13: 9780985541514

Ages 5-18 | Pages 34

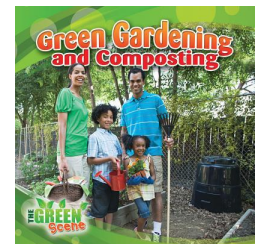


Green Gardening and Composting (Green Scene) by Molly Aloian

This informative title will inspire "budding" activists to go green in the garden! Accessible text and engaging photographs introduce composting and Earth-friendly gardening. Readers learn how to build a compost bin, what items to recycle in the bin, and how to use compost to start their own garden.

ISBN-13: 9780778702764

Ages 6-9 | Pages 24

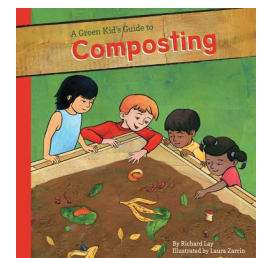


A Green Kid's Guide to Composting by Richard Lay

A Green Kid's Guide to Composting will teach students how to build a compost bin with help from an adult, what to recycle in your compost bin, and how to use compost to fertilize a garden--all without harmful chemicals! A compost research project will give students a hands-on activity to get them interested in gardening. Common Core and State Standards for life cycles, soil, measuring, observing, and reporting can all be connected to this book..

ISBN-13: 9781616419431

Ages 6-9 | Pages 24

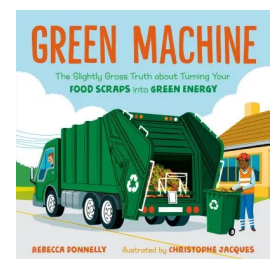


Green Machine: The Slightly Gross Truth about Turning Your Food Scraps into Green Energy by Rebecca Donnelly

Composting is cool! Celebrate the innovation and science that help turn food waste into green energy. This book shows readers how food scraps are composted, collected, and processed, transforming trash into biogas and electricity. It's a green machine.

ISBN-13: 9781250304063

Ages 4-8 | Pages 32

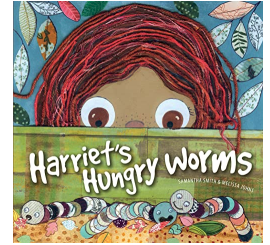


Harriet's Hungry Worms by Samantha Smith

This funny, engaging eco story invites young readers to follow the adventures of Harriet's ravenous compost worms as they munch their way through their wide and wonderful weekly menu. Packed with worm facts, Harriet's Hungry Worms is the ideal companion for worm warriors and curious composters keen to roll their sleeves up and put their kitchen food scraps to good use.

ISBN-13: 9781922539472

Ages 4-7 | Pages 32

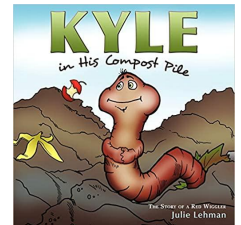


Kyle in His Compost Pile by Julie Lehman

Kyle is a red wiggler worm who lives in a worm composting bin. He enjoys feasting on all the "yummy" items that get thrown at him. Learn what Kyle likes, what isn't so good for him, and what to do with compost when Kyle is done with it.

ISBN-13: 9781449091125

Ages 10-14 | Pages 28

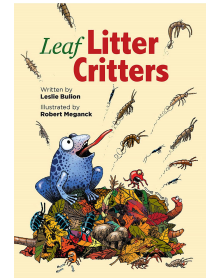


Leaf Litter Critters by Leslie Bulion

For all the kids who can't resist turning over a rock, science poetry maven Leslie Bulion presents nineteen lively ecological poems in a variety of verse forms about the "brown food web" and the creatures that live there—from bacteria and rove beetles to mushrooms and millipedes, and all of the other busy recyclers in between.

ISBN-13: 9781682631836

Ages 8-12 | Pages 48



Let's Compost!: Caring for our Planet (Me, My Friends, My Community: Caring for our Planet) by Vita Jiménez

Composting is one way of reducing waste. Instead of throwing away things like banana peels and eggs, you can compost them! It's nature's way of recycling. In this catchy song paired with colorful illustrations, children learn how to compost. This paperback book comes with online music access.

ISBN-13: 9781632907820

Ages 6-8 | Pages 24

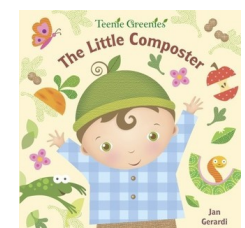


The Little Composter by Jan Gerardi

HOW DOES YOUR garden grow? With apple cores and carrot tops and wiggly worms all in a row! A young child builds a compost in this back-to-the-earth lift-the-flap board book. Toddlers will love these seven spreads of playful rhymes and illustrations that show how much fun working with dirt can be.

ISBN-13: 9780375854125

Ages toddlers | Pages 16



The Magic School Bus Meets The Rot Squad: A Book About Decomposition by Joanna Cole

The students in Ms. Frizzle's class embark on another journey when the Magic School Bus tours a decomposing log that introduces the latter end of the life cycle and teaches readers that there's more to rot than meets the nose.

ISBN-13: 9780590400237

Ages 4-8 | Pages 32



Puffin Little Environmentalist: Composting by Penguin Random House Australia

Just because we're little doesn't mean we can't learn BIG facts. Have you ever wondered how you could help save the planet? If you're a Little Environmentalist who is curious about composting, you're about to delve into the dirt with Puffin Little!

ISBN-13: 9781760897017

Ages 5-7 | Pages 96



Really Rotten Truth About Composting (Let's Explore Science) by Jodie Mangor

In Really Rotten Truth About Composting, students will learn about the biological processes involved with composting, including a breakdown of primary, secondary, and tertiary level consumers. Readers will love discovering new information in this chapter book while also reinforcing learned skills with comprehension and extension activities.

ISBN-13: 9781681913926

Ages 10-13 | Pages 48

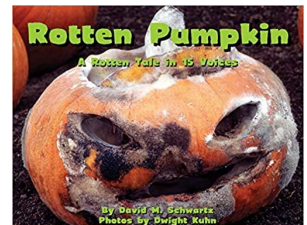


Rotten Pumpkin by David Schwartz

In brilliant images and an easy-to-understand text, Schwartz and Kuhn tell the story of what happens to a Jack O' Lantern after Halloween. Compost won't mean the same thing after you've seen the amazing transformation of Jack from grinning pumpkin to mold-mottled wreckage to hopeful green shoot. Part story, part science, and a whole lot of fun.

ISBN-13: 9781939547033

Ages 4-11 | Pages 32

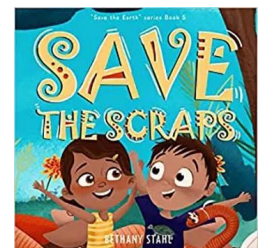


Save the Scraps by Bethany Stahl

This book tells the story of two children who learn how to compost with the help of their wiggly worm friend. With charming illustrations, adults will love reading this book with their kids as readers learn about the benefits of compost.

ISBN-13: 9781951987053

Ages 3-8 | Pages 16

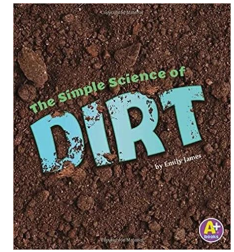


The Simple Science of Dirt by Emily James

This is a really great beginner non-fiction book that introduces the basics of dirt. Kids (and adults) learn what dirt is, different parts of dirt, and why it's so important in our lives. It has great photos to support the learning, and I learned plenty of things myself.

ISBN-13: 978-1515770923

Ages 4-8 | Pages 32



Way To Grow! Gardening Composting by Rebecca Pettiford

This is a really great non-fiction book for early readers and those just learning about composting. The book is part of a larger series that strives to teach kids about various aspects of gardening while also helping them learn how to use non-fiction books with headings, labels, "did you know" sections, and a table of contents.

ISBN-13: 9781620312292

Ages 7-11 | Pages 24

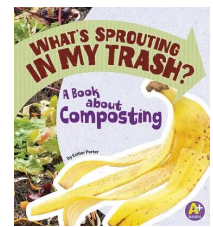


What's Sprouting In My Trash: A Book About Composting by Esther Porter

Filled with helpful photographs of the various steps involved in composting, this book offers kids an inside look at the basic science of composting. The book highlights why it's important, how composting happens, the importance of the microorganisms that do the work, and how it helps our environment.

ISBN-13: 9781620657454

Ages 4-8 | Pages 32

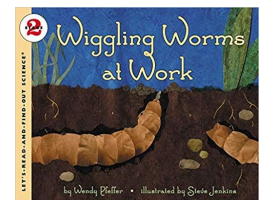


Wiggling Worms at Work by Wendy Pfeffer

Read and find out about worms and the important work they do in this colorfully illustrated nonfiction picture book. Crawling through the dirt, worms are hard at work. Worms help the fruit and vegetables we eat by loosening the soil and feeding the plants. Read and find out about these wiggling wonders!

ISBN-13: 9780064451994

Ages 3-7 | Pages 40



You Wouldn't Want To Live Without Soil! by Ian Graham

Starting with the history of soil from four billion years ago, this illustrated book is a fun way to understand how our soil came to be, how we should take care of it, and the myriad ways it's important to us today. Even though it's a light introduction, it's a great way to reinforce with our children why we need to take good care of our soil and what actions we can take today and in the future to protect this precious resource.

ISBN-13: 9780531224380

Ages 8-11 | Pages 40

