

Wiggly Worms

Hands on Investigation with Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District

- Here in the HCSWCD Education Department we offer a variety of free educational programs. One of our most popular programs is called Wiggly Worms. This program allows students to discover the world of worms with the Story “Tunneling Earthworms”, they will learn what they eat, how they survive, and what environment they live in. A worm bin will be brought into the classroom so participants can have a hands-on experience with the worms and investigate why the underground world is so important to us. To schedule this free program visit <http://www.hcswcd.org/classroom-programs.html> or call 513-772-7645 and ask for Sara or Gwen.

Garden/Playground Inquiry Activity

- Students will have the opportunity to investigate the places worms live. Group students into groups of 3-4. Have each group come up with a prediction as to where they think they are likely to find the most worms. For example a group may predict that they will find the most worms in flower garden on the far side of the playground. Once students have made their predictions give each group of students a trowel and head outside. It is important for students to know that they are not to move the worms. The goal of the activity is to uncover them, count them and then cover them back up. Once all groups have finished their investigation head back inside and graph the results.
- Potential Wrap Up Questions
 - Where were the most worms found?
 - Why did certain areas have more worms?
 - If groups did not find any worms discuss possible reasons for worms being absent.
 - Were worms found in groups or by themselves?

Build a Vermicomposting Bin

- What is vermicomposting you ask? Vermicomposting uses worms to break down organic material such as food waste. Vermicomposting can be an easy way to get your students interested in composting and can also show them the importance of worms. Vermicomposting bins do not produce foul odors and can be kept inside your classroom.
- For direction on how to build your very own vermicomposting bin visit <http://makezine.com/projects/make-your-own-worm-bin/>.
- Vermicomposting bins can also be purchased. Here in the office we use what is called the Can-O-Worms Worm Composter. We have had very good luck with this product and recommend it for those who are interested in purchasing a vermicomposting bin. The Can-O-Worms Worm Composter can be purchased from a variety of retailers, <http://www.planetnatural.com/product/can-o-worms/> is one option.

Worm Facts

- If you cut a worm in half it will not survive. Only the tail will re-grow if it becomes detached.
- Worms breathe through their skin.
- Only adult worms have a clitellum. A clitellum demonstrates that a worms as reached sexual maturity.
- Worms are hermaphrodites; they have both male and female parts. Still takes two worms to reproduce.
- Worms have 5 hearts.
- When scared worms excrete a yellow liquid through their skin. This liquid taste bitter and is used to deter animals from eating the worm.

