

A close-up photograph of a pair of weathered, brown hands cupping a small, vibrant green seedling with four leaves. The seedling is growing out of a mound of dark, rich soil. The background is a dark, textured surface, possibly more soil or a dark fabric. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the texture of the hands and the freshness of the plant.

# COMPOST 101

Presented by Sara Sellitti & Barbara Miglio

# What is Compost?

In a nutshell, **compost** is decomposed organic matter. **Composting** is a natural process of recycling organic material such as leaves and food scraps into a rich soil amendment that gardeners fondly nickname Black Gold.

When a leaf falls on the forest floor, it breaks down over a period of time. There are many organisms (macro and micro/visible to the eye or need a microscope to see). These creatures are also known as decomposers (worms, centipedes, sow bugs, fungus) that eat, digest and break down dead plant and animal material to make a dark substance called **humus**.

This **humus** goes back into the ground to build healthy soil. When we (humans) make **humus**, it's called **COMPOST**. We can take our food scraps, plant material, paper, and yard waste and mix them to make **compost** that eventually can go back into a garden/ vegetable bed or landscaped area.



These are some of the insects and organisms that help to break down organic matter into the rich brown fertilizer, we know as COMPOST. Decomposers such as earthworms, slugs, pill bugs, ants and fungi are some of the creatures hard at work breaking down plant material and act as nature's recyclers.

# What you need to make compost...

Whether you are composting indoors with vermicomposting (worms), outdoors using a 3-bin system for garden waste, or an enclosed tumbler or bin for food scraps, they all require the same 3 things:

## Carbon & Nitrogen

Browns (dry) & Greens (wet)  
Leaves, wood chips  
Weeds, organic matter

## Air

Composting is an aerobic (air needing process)

## Water/Moisture

Can come from the wet material you add or from a water source



# FOOD WASTE AUDIT by Braeden Cohen

# MATH OLYMPIAD GRAPHS DATA FROM FOOD WASTE AUDIT

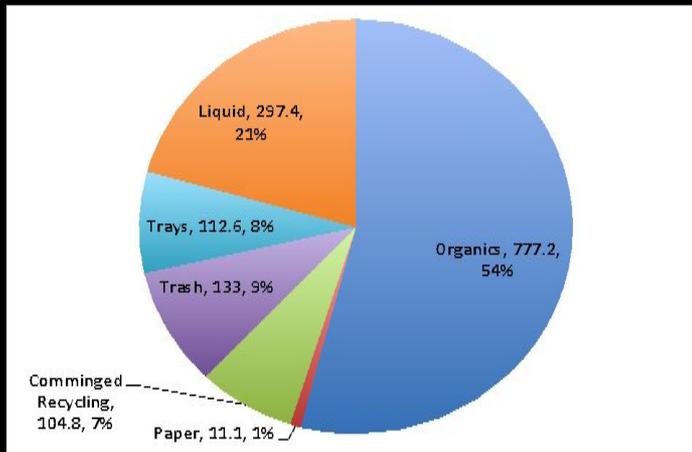
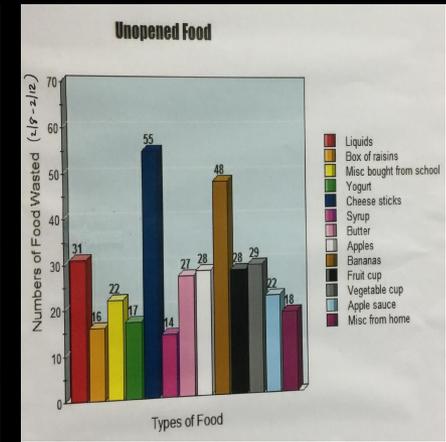
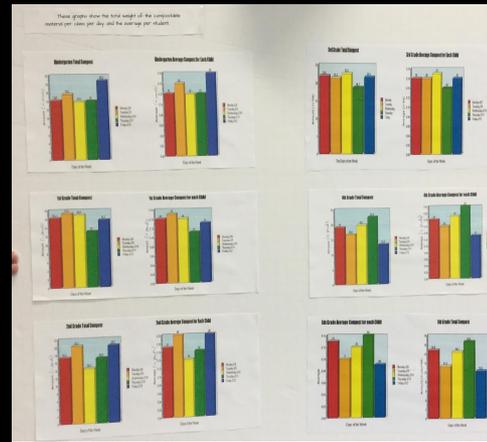


Figure 1: Waste profile by weight. This chart depicts the breakdown of waste by weight of each material: Organics, paper recycling, commingled recycling (metal, glass and plastic), liquids, trays and trash.



When Springhurst conducted a Food Waste Audit with Braeden Cohen, we found out that most of the waste thrown out in the cafeteria was recyclable and compostable. We realized that waste doesn't have to be waste. We could recycle/ compost 2/3 of our waste and keep this trash from ending up in a landfill.

Mr. Rosen and his Math Olympiads analyzed the waste discarded in the cafeteria. They discovered that the majority of items thrown into the trash bin were bananas and cheese sticks. As a result, we now have a donation box in the cafeteria where these items could be donated to people who need it through the Midnight Run program in Dobbs Ferry.

Bravo Springhurst!



In JULY 2016, the Springhurst Head Custodian, Rob, and his team constructed a 4-bin composting system to process all food scraps from the lunchroom. It takes about 6 months to turn our food scraps into compost . that can be used to fertilize all the landscaped areas around our school.



The compost generated will also be used to nourish the 28 bed organic garden located in our Outdoor Classroom.



# The vegetables that are harvested support two school-wide events...our Spring Salad Day

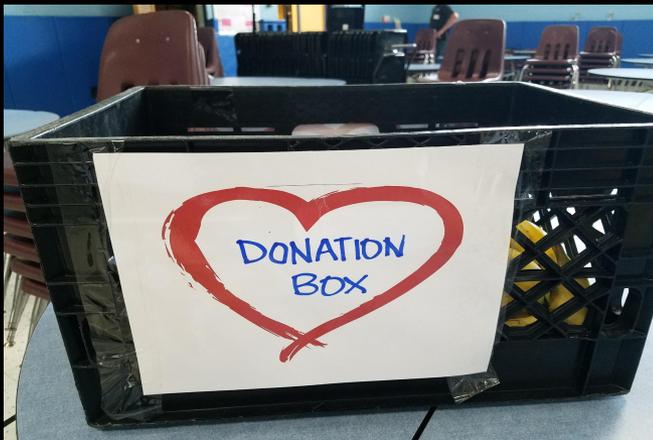




and Fall Soup Day.



Greenburgh Nature Center along with Oscar the Grouch reminds us which bin should be used to discard our lunch waste. We now have a Donation Box in the cafeteria to for unused food that is not going home or will not be eaten later. It will then go to someone who needs it.



Mrs. Misrok and the student government representatives have also supported recycling and composting in our lunchroom cafeteria! You may remember their visit to your classroom.



And many of you have volunteered to be a **COMPOST KEEPER** to help your classmates sort their trash appropriately in the cafeteria. Thank you all!



# Let's see if you know what bin these items belong to?



# Answer Key

Tray bin



Compost Paper



Trash



Recycle



Trash



Trash



Trash



Recycle



Trash



Recycle



Recycle



Trash



Trash

