

Compost Challenge

By
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- Synopsis:** Ditty learns about compost and landfills.
- Concepts:** Composting, Landfills, landfill construction, groundwater protection, aquifers, conservation
- Props:** Trash Bags of leaves
- Characters:** Ditty: opinionated, out spoken, blonde
Vermi: reserved, but bright earthworm
(we use Vermi's tail with a separate puppeteer to allow for direct assault on Ditty.)
Staff member
- Ditty:** Wow!!! Somebody better be getting this mess cleaned up. All of this trash needs to go to the dump.
- Staff:** Hold on, Ditty. Is all of this trash?
- Ditty:** Trash bags hold trash. Get it out of here!!
- Staff:** OK. Sometimes trash bags hold trash, but these bags are full of leaves and pine straw.
- Ditty:** So..... TRASH..... Get them to the dump!
- Staff:** Hold it, Ditty. We do not send leaves and pine straw to the dump. Number 1, dumps are no longer used to dispose any waste. Now we use sanitary landfills.
- Ditty:** Sam Terry whats?
- Staff:** Not Sam Terry, sanitary landfills...
(to audience)Can you say sanitary landfill??
- All:** Sanitary landfill

Staff: Again!

All: Sanitary landfill

(Vermi peeks over edge of stage unnoticed)

Staff: Great job. Sanitary landfills are used to dispose the trash that we make in our homes. But leaves and pine straw have a much better use than going to the landfill. Do you know what we should do with old leaves and pine straw?

Vermi: Excuse me!! I know!!

Ditty: AHHHHHH A snake!!!

Staff: Calm down, Ditty. (to Vermi) Hi! Who are you??

Vermi: I am a red worm, you can call me Vermi.

Staff: Well, hello, Vermi. It is very nice to meet you. But where did you come from??

Vermi: I live under the ground. I am particularly fond of places where leaves and grass are decomposing.

Ditty: DECOM WHATTING???

Vermi: Decomposing. Breaking down, rotting. Returning to the soil from whence they came. Decomposing. (to audience) I bet you can say Decomposing.

All: Decomposing

Vermi: Very good, once more.

All: Decomposing

Ditty: OK..... we all learned a new word. Decomposing means breaking down or rotting... **BUT WHAT ABOUT ALL THESE TRASH BAGS!!!**

Staff: Chill a second, Ditty. I bet Vermi can help us with our trash bag problem,

Ditty: Maybe, but I cannot help but notice that Vermi is **JUST** a worm.

(Vermi's tail promptly makes direct hit to Ditty's head)

Staff: A worm, yes, but maybe not just a worm. What about it Vermi.

Vermi: I am a red worm, red wiggler, manure worm, the cornerstone of organic decomposition.

Ditty: Again with the big words. Give it a break, guys!! And get these bags moving.

Staff: Vermi, may I?

Vermi: After you, Alfonse.

Staff: Ditty, your bags of leaves and pine straw should be composted, not sent to the landfill.

Ditty: Why do I get the feeling I am stuck in room with the Wikipedia? OK... I will bite. How do I compost them?

Staff: You can buy a compost bin, or make one from a scrap of chicken wire fencing and some fence poles. You can make one from cinder blocks or build a wooden one from old wooden pallets. You can even just pile the leaves in your yard and let them compost in a pile.

Ditty: OK! but where does the worm come into the picture??

(Ditty uses “worm” with disgust. Vermi’s tail hits Ditty and Ditty tries to dodge)

Staff: First mold, bacteria and fungus will start working on the leaves. They soften the leaves and pine straw. Then Vermi and all his cousins can get to work. They will break down the material further and turn it into a high quality soil amendment that you can use in your flowerbeds and vegetable garden.

Ditty: COOL. So the leaves and pine straw in those bags should not go to the dump or landfill or whatever, it should be composted in my backyard.

Staff: Right Ditty!! And by composting you are saving landfill space, which is very expensive, protecting our groundwater, and improving the quality of the soil in your yard.

Ditty: WOW!! That is a lot to get done in one afternoon. Conserving landfill space, protecting groundwater and improving the soil. I think I will need a nap once we get finished building the compost bin and getting all this stuff put into it. But is there more that I should know?

Vermi: In addition to leaves and pine straw, grass clippings can be composted.

Staff: Right!! And I bet our friends could tell us some other things that we could add to our compost pile. What about it kids??

(Wait, encouraging youngsters to contribute ideas. A ‘plant’ in the audience is OK)

ALL : Apple cores, banana peels, old potatoes, rotten oranges, egg shells,

Staff: WOW!!! You all know a lot about composting Do you know what is bad to put in the compost pile?

All: Meat, salty stuff, greasy stuff.

Staff: Great!!! Let's get this compost operation going. I think Ditty is right.....we will have earned a nap after we get all of that done. Let's get to work, how about it. Let's go get the stuff!!!

All: Compost here we come!!!

CURTAIN