

EARTH DAY

ACTIVITY BOOK



Hello!

This booklet is your guide to exploring simple, hands-on ways to care for the earth, right from your own home, garden, or kitchen. As you visit each activity station at the market, you'll learn how small actions like composting, planting seeds, and growing the right plants together can make a big difference.

Inside, you'll find easy tips, fun activities, and ideas you can try at home, whether you have a big backyard, a small space, or just a sunny windowsill. Everything here is designed with our Central Texas climate in mind, so you can grow with confidence.

Have fun, get your hands dirty, and discover how you can help things grow.

Let's get started!

Keep your eyes peeled for our friendly planet. Wherever you see him, you can collect a stamp.

Collect all 4 for a prize!



COMPOSTING IN A SMALL YARD

Why compost?

Composting turns your kitchen scraps and yard waste into a wonderful soil amendment. Compost helps plants grow stronger, helps soil hold water better, and reduces the need for buying fertilizers. It's an easy way to reduce waste and give back to your garden.

What you need...

- A small bin, tumbler, or simple pile (even a 2x2 ft space works!)
- A mix of "greens" and "browns"
- A little water and air



What to add?



Greens (nitrogen-rich) - think fresh, soft, and moist:

Fruit and veggie scraps

Coffee ground and tea leaves

Grass clippings



Browns (carbon-rich) - think dry and crispy:

Dry leaves

Shredded paper or cardboard

Small twigs



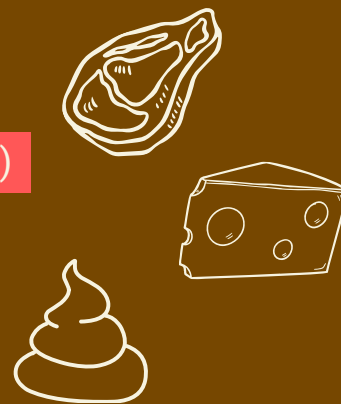
Aim for roughly 2 parts browns to 1 part greens

What to avoid!

Meat, dairy, oily foods (they attract pests)

Pet waste

Diseased plants



How to build your compost

1

Start with a layer of course browns (for airflow - this could be things like chunky wood chips or branches)

2

Add greens

3

Cover with more browns

4

Repeat as you collect scraps and wet down the pile! You want the compost to produce a couple drops of water if you pick up a handful and squeeze.



Keep everything covered with browns to reduce smells and pests.

When is it ready?

- ✓ When it looks like dark, crumbly soil
- ✓ When it smells earthy (not stinky)
- ✓ You can't recognize the original scraps

How to use it

- Mix into garden beds
- Add to potted plants
- Spread as a top layer around veggies or flowers



Central Texas tips

- 1 Water matters: Compost should feel like a wrung-out sponge
- 2 Shade helps: Place your bin out of full afternoon sun to prevent drying out
- 3 Turn it: Mix every 1-2 weeks to speed things up
- 4 Watch the heat: Summer compost can dry fast - check it often
- 5 Critters: Use a bin with a lid if raccoons or rodents are around



Try this
at home!

Start small! Even a bucket-sized bin or a tucked-away corner of your yard can make a big difference.

Don't forget your stamp!



Quick Quiz

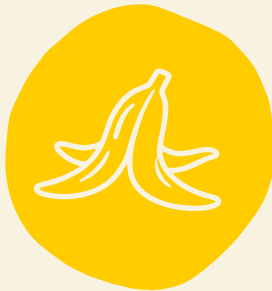
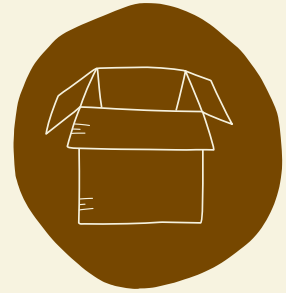
Test your knowledge!





Quick Quiz - COMPOST

1. Can you sort it? Draw a line from each item to the right place: GREENS (fresh & wet) or BROWNS (dry & crunchy)



Greens

Browns

2. Circle the things that do NOT belong in compost



Cheese



Leaves



Meat



Plastic



Fruit scraps

3. What does compost turn into?



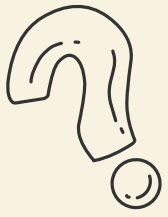
Dirt



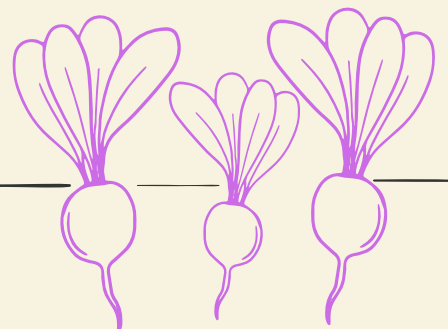
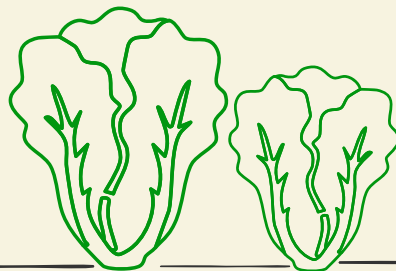
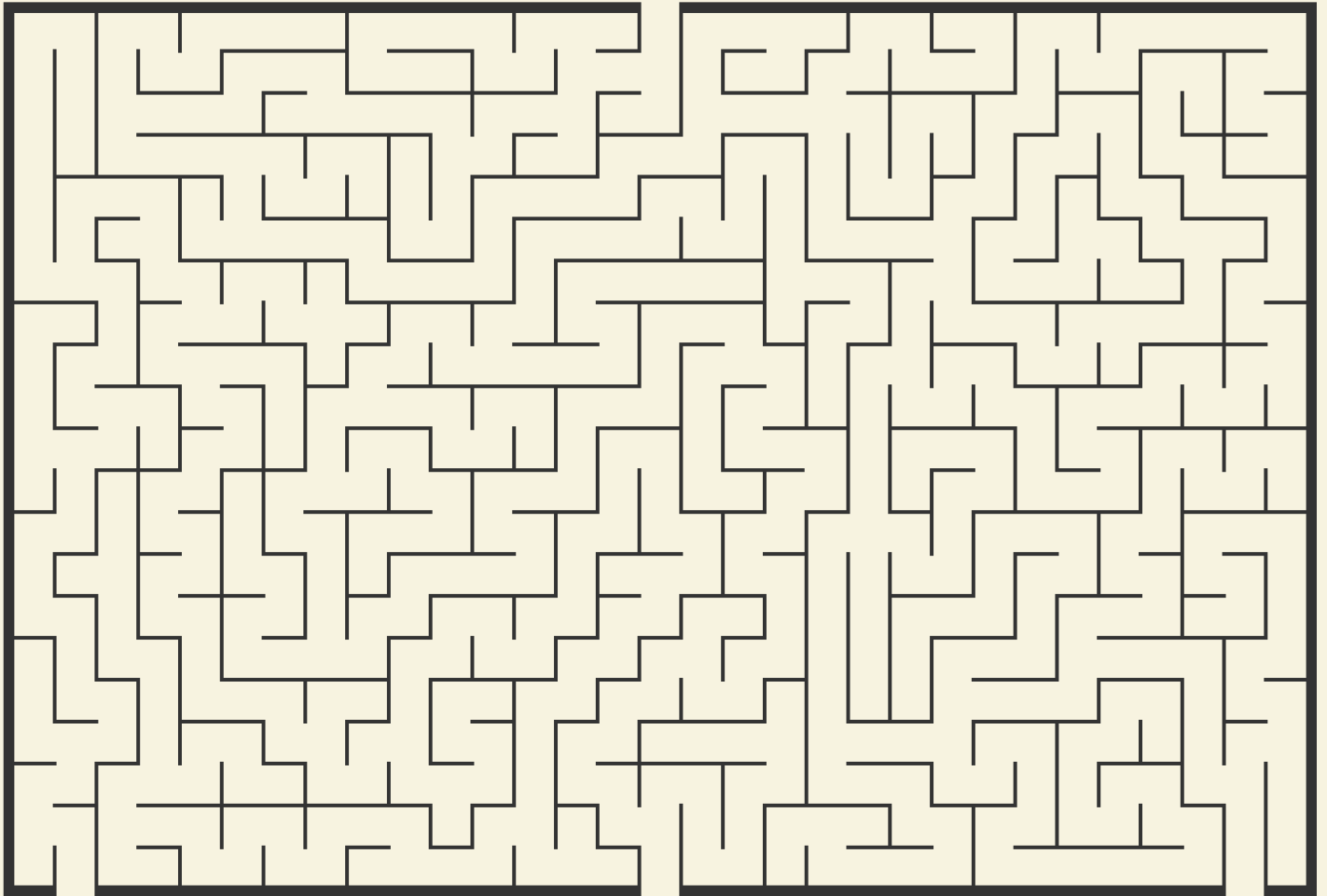
Trash



A soil amendment



Can you find your garden?



SEED PLANTING

Why use cardboard egg cartons?

Cardboard egg cartons or toilet paper rolls are a fun, low-cost way to start seeds at home. They're the perfect size for small seedlings and can be reused or composted.

What you need...

- Empty egg carton or toilet paper roll
- Seeds (herbs, flowers, or veggies)
- Potting soil
- Water



How to plant

- 1 Fill each cup with soil
- 2 Add 1-2 seeds per cup
- 3 Cover lightly with soil
- 4 Water gently (keep soil moist, not soggy)
- 5 Place in a sunny window



- 🕒 Seeds usually sprout in 5–10 days
- 🕒 Keep turning so plants grow straight
- 🕒 Add a little water if the soil feels dry

Watch
them grow
at home!

When to move them

Once seedlings are a few inches tall:

- Carefully cut apart each section
- Plant directly in the ground or a bigger pot - cardboard cartons can go straight into the soil, they'll break down over time!



Central Texas tip

Start seeds indoors during extreme heat or cold, then move them outside once the weather is mild.

Don't forget your stamp!



COMPANION PLANTING

What is companion planting?

Companion planting means growing certain plants together so they can help each other thrive. Some plants repel pests, some improve soil, and others attract pollinators like bees and butterflies. While others can provide shade to keep soil cooler and damp for longer.

Why it works in Central Texas



With hot summers, dry spells, and lots of insects, companion planting can:

- ✓ Help protect crops naturally from pests
- ✓ Provide shade and reduce water loss
- ✓ Attract beneficial insects
- ✓ Make the most of small garden spaces
- ✓ Increase yield



Plants that help your whole garden

Marigolds repel pests and attract pollinators

Sunflowers bring in pollinators and can provide shade

Basil & other herbs attract beneficial insects

Onions & other alliums repel pests



Easy companion pairs to try



Tomatoes ✓ *Basil*

Basil may help repel pests and can improve tomato flavor.



Carrots ✓ *Onions*

Onions help deter carrot pests, and they don't compete for space.



Cucumbers ✓ *Marigolds*

Marigolds can help keep harmful insects away.



Peppers ✓ *Herbs*

Herbs can act as ground cover and attract helpful insects.



Start simple - you don't need a big garden—just try pairing 2–3 companion plants in a small bed or even a container.

Plants to keep apart

Onions



Beans

Onions can slow bean growth

Fennel



Most plants

Fennel doesn't play well with others



Central Texas tips



1

Give plants space: Good airflow helps prevent disease in heat and humidity

2

Use shade wisely: Taller plants (like sunflowers) can protect smaller ones from intense afternoon sun

3

Water smart: Group plants with similar water needs together

4

Plant for the season: Cool-season crops (like carrots) do best in fall/spring, not peak summer

Try planting a "pizza garden" with tomatoes, basil, and peppers—all growing happily together!

Try this
at home!

Don't forget your stamp!





Quick Quiz - companion planting

1. Draw a line to match plants that grow well together!



2. Circle the pairs that don't like to grow together:

Tomato

Carrot

Onion

Beans

Cucumber

Marigold

3. Circle the plants that help bring bees and butterflies to your garden



Marigold



Lettuce



Sunflower



Basil

4. Why do we plant certain crops together?

To help them grow better

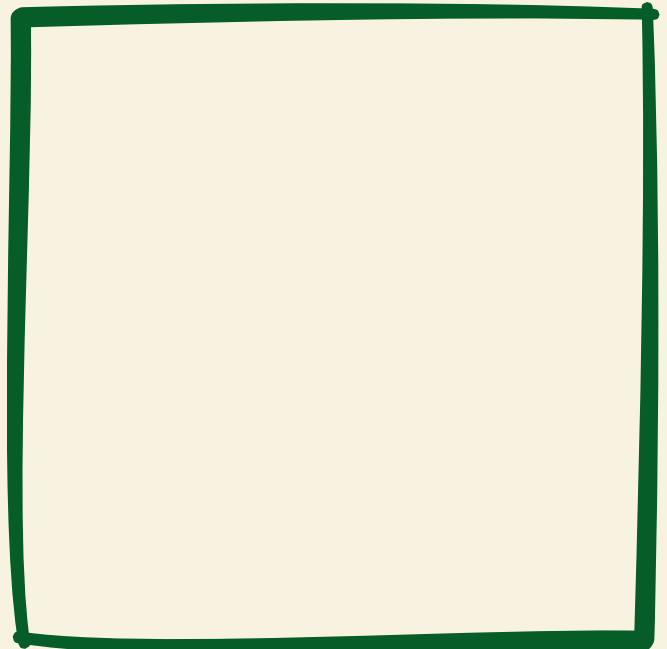
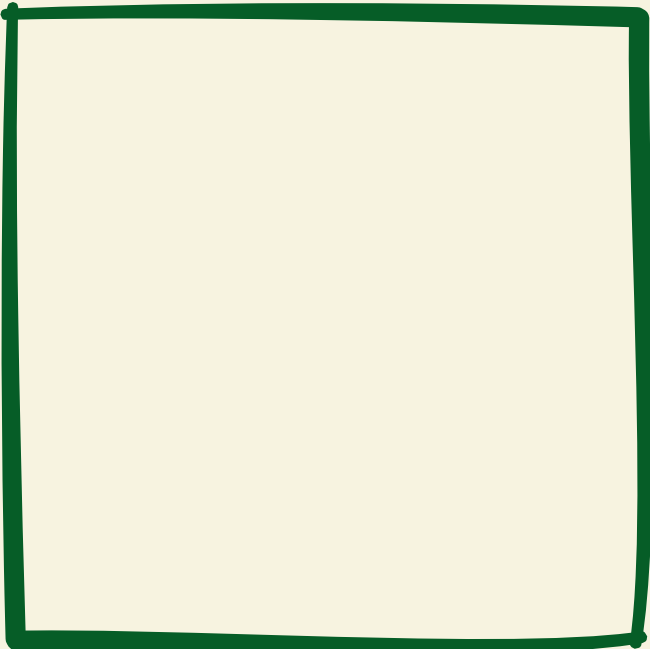
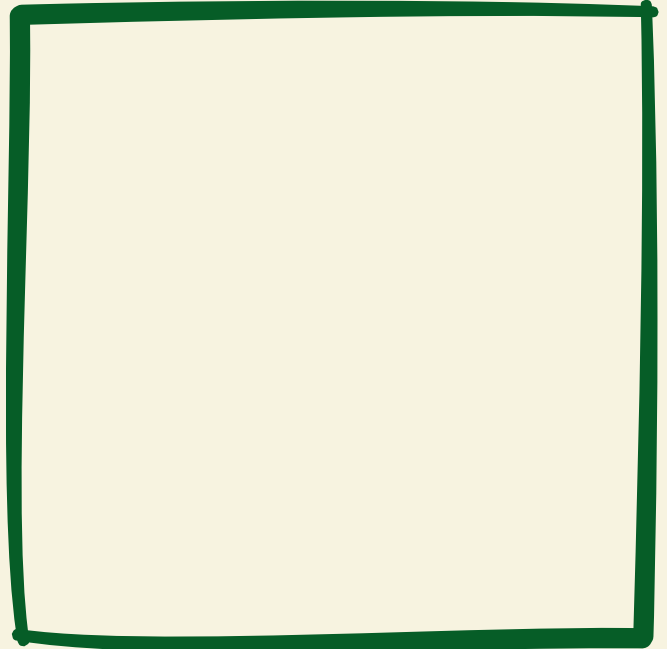
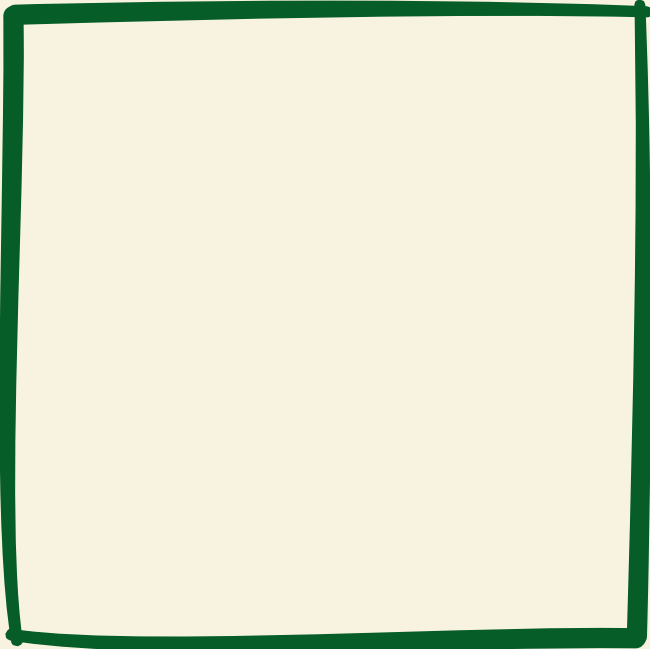
Just for fun

It doesn't matter



Draw your own garden beds!

Can you place plant "friends" next to each other?



SENSORY PLANTING

What is sensory planting?

Sensory planting is all about creating a garden you can touch, smell, see, and even hear. Using Texas native plants is ideal but not essential, there are plenty of sensory plants that are adapted to our heat, need less water, and support local pollinators.

How to make a sensory garden

Choose plants with different textures, scents, and colors:

- ✓ Soft leaves like lamb's ear for touching
- ✓ Fragrant herbs like rosemary and lavender for smelling
- ✓ Bright flowers like salvia or blackfoot daisy for seeing
- ✓ Grasses that rustle in the breeze for sound



Try this
at home!

Plant a small mix and explore it - touch, watch, and notice how it changes through the seasons.

Don't forget your stamp!



Thank you!

Thanks for celebrating Earth Day with us!

We hope this booklet has inspired you to try something new, whether that's planting a seed, starting a compost bin, or simply spending more time noticing the world around you.

Small actions add up. Every garden planted, every scrap composted, and every pollinator supported helps grow a healthier community and planet.

Join us each week at the market to keep learning, connect with local growers, and find everything you need to grow your own.

Don't forget to show your stamps at the info booth to collect your prize!



Elgin Farmers' Market, Thursdays 4pm-7pm
Veterans' Memorial Park, Elgin TX
www.elginfarmersmarket.com