Go Green at Home Challenge

Compost and Reduce Wasted Food

It's Earth Month! Thanks for taking actions to help the environment!

Finish all the food on your plate to avoid wasting food.	Bake stale chips and crackers in a toaster oven/oven to make them crispy again.	Find two different kinds of birds.	Put food in the freezer to keep it from going bad.
Go for a walk or bike ride.	Put bread in the freezer to help it last (better than in the fridge).	Revive wilted veggies by placing them in ice water.	Help get a meal ready.
Play the Waste Sorting Game on the DPW website.	Find a flowering tree.	Repurpose your food, such as: freeze overripe bananas for smoothies or make them into banana bread.	Put food scraps and food-soiled paper towels and napkins in a compost bin.
Watch a video about food waste in the US.	Put leftovers into a reusable container for another time.	Check out the Food Waste brochure to see if your food can last longer than you think.	Find three leaves that are different shapes.
Make a poster promoting reducing wasted food or composting -- or both!	Put the end of a bunch of celery, green onion or romaine lettuce in water and watch it grow.	Water a street tree.	Use the "Get Rid of It Right" tool on the DPW website to see how to dispose of something properly.

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Links:

- Watch a video about food waste:
  - Life of a Strawberry - https://bit.ly/2K6E5Vb
  - SavingFood Educational Video Tailored to Children - https://bit.ly/2Rw4HDu
- Link to the Food Waste brochure: https://bit.ly/3e5U43H (created by CRLS students in 2017)
- Regrow celery, green onions or romaine lettuce -- and more! -- in water: https://bit.ly/34oKR20

- Find the "Get Rid of It Right" tool on this page of the DPW website: https://bit.ly/3bO1wyr
- Find Cambridge's Waste Sorting Game on this page: https://bit.ly/3bO1wyr

Calculate the Impact:

You have 4 bananas that are overripe. They each weigh .5 pound. If you freeze them to later put them in a smoothie, how many pounds will you keep from disposal in the compost/trash?	Five (5) families each have wilted carrots that weigh 2 pounds and they are about to throw them out / compost them. Instead, all the families crisp up the carrots in ice water and eat them. How many pounds have they kept out of the compost/trash?	A family worked to reduce their wasted food. They used to have 6 pounds per week and now only have 2 pounds per week. How many pounds less do they have per week now? How many pounds will they save over 10 weeks?

For Older Students:

Measure the volume of your trash, recycle and/or compost bins. (Volume = height x width x length) Which is biggest? How many of the smallest bin could you fit into the biggest?

Make a true/false quiz for your family about expiration dates and ways to reduce food waste.

More videos about food waste:

- The Food Waste Education Solution - https://bit.ly/2xtbBCm
- CBS News – Expiration Dates - https://cbsn.ws/39VVqeb

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Compost and Reduce Wasted Food

Why Should We Reduce Wasted Food?

From: https://www.epa.gov/recycle/reducing-wasted-food-home

Most people don't realize how much food they throw away every day — from uneaten leftovers to spoiled produce. About 94 percent of the food we throw away ends up in landfills or combustion facilities. In 2017, we disposed of 38.1 million tons of food waste. By managing food sustainably and reducing waste, we can help businesses and consumers save money, provide a bridge in our communities for those who do not have enough to eat, and conserve resources for future generations.

Benefits of Reducing Wasted Food

- **Saves money** from buying less food.
- **Reduces methane emissions** from landfills and lowers your carbon footprint.
- **Conserves energy and resources**, preventing pollution involved in the growing, manufacturing, transporting, and selling food (not to mention hauling the food waste and then landfilling it).
- **Supports your community** by providing donated untouched food that would have otherwise gone to waste to those who might not have a steady food supply.

For many tips for PLANNING, STORAGE, PREP and THIFTINESS to reduce wasted food, visit here:
https://www.epa.gov/recycle/reducing-wasted-food-home

Also: https://savethefood.com/ has great resources, including a section on cooking with scraps: https://savethefood.com/recipes/ and an interactive storage guide: https://savethefood.com/storage.

Also check out: Food Waste brochure created by CRLS students in 2017: https://bit.ly/3e5U43H

Why We Separate Our Food Scraps

From: https://www.cambridgema.gov/Services/curbsidecomposting

Removing food scraps reduces trash in landfills. By diverting our food scraps, we are helping protect the environment by:

- Reducing our impact on climate change. Our food scraps become clean energy through anaerobic digestion.
- Returning nutrients to the Earth in the form of fertilizer.

DPW brings food scraps and other compostables to a facility in Charlestown where it is screened to remove contaminants and blended into a slurry. The slurry then goes into an anaerobic digestion tank that uses microbes to eat the organic material, releasing methane. The methane is captured to make clean energy in the form of heat and electricity. Remaining solids are made into a nutrient-rich fertilizer. For a more detailed account on this process, please check out Where do food scraps from Cambridge go for organics recycling?

Keep Track of Your Progress!

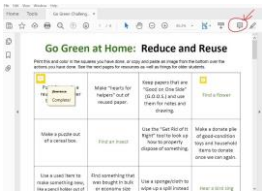
There are many ways that you can keep track of what actions you've done. See below for a few ideas or you can create your own method.

Have a printer?

Print the board and use stickers or crayons to mark when you've completed an action.

Take a picture of the board and "edit" your picture on your phone.

Make a comment on the document using the "comment" tool.



Get Social while we socially distance:

We wish we were all in the classroom together this month, but since we can't be, let's connect socially! Use the hashtag #GoGreenCambridge to share your Go Green at Home Challenge actions this Earth Month. Talk with your parents before you post anything online. Below are some Cambridge social media accounts to tag on Twitter or Instagram:

- Cambridge Public Schools: cambridge_cpsd (Twitter) & cambridgepublicschools (Instagram)
- Cambridge STEAM Initiative: STEAM_Cambridge (Twitter) & steamcambma (Instagram)
- Cambridge Department of Public Works: CambridgeDPW on Twitter
- Cambridge Community Development Department: CDDat344 on Twitter & Instagram