

Worms Warm the Heart at West End Elementary School



West End Elementary School's fifth grade students are discovering first-hand the magic of worms and their value in digesting some of the 420,000 tons of food waste we bury or burn every year here in North Carolina. Food waste makes up 20% of our landfill waste, and is easily diverted to a much more productive end use via composters or worm bins. [Sustainable Sandhills](#), with the generous support of [Carolina Worm Castings](#) is helping Moore County students learn the value of recycling their food scraps with the help of worms.

Fifth grade science teachers Brad Thomson, Patrice Martinez, and Mary Susan Humphrey pitched in to build three worm bins, and then layer them with shredded paper and handfuls of red wiggler worms. Over the school year, students will study vermiculture, feeding and caring for their worms. In the spring, students will harvest their worm castings and use this nutritious supplement in the school garden.

Vermicomposting (worm composting) turns many types of kitchen waste into a nutritious soil for plants. When worm compost is added to soil, it boosts the nutrients available to plants and enhances soil structure and drainage.

Using worms to decompose food waste offers several advantages:

- It reduces household garbage disposal costs;
- It produces less odor and attracts fewer pests than putting food waste into a garbage container;
- It saves the water and electricity that kitchen sink garbage disposal units consume;
- It produces a free, high-quality soil amendment (compost);
- It requires little space, labor, or maintenance;
- It spawns free worms for fishing.

For more information, click [here](#).