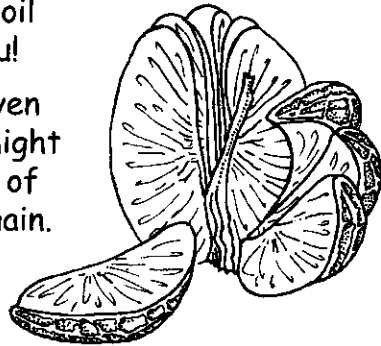




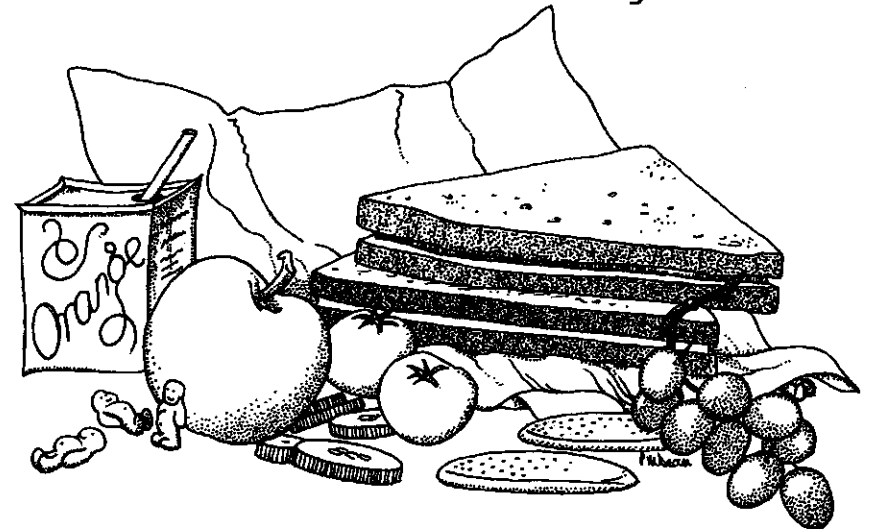
Hints, Tips and Ideas

- Discuss with children which foods are easily compostable. Ask them to suggest ideas (pieces of raw vegetables, any fruit).
- Consider products like bread, rice-cakes, cakes and biscuits. Do the children know what they are made from, and where those ingredients come from? Although compostable, these may attract vermin.
- Sandwich fillings might be mentioned in this way: meat, fish and cheese cannot be safely composted, but no-one expects children to be throwing away much of their lunch, so this should not cause a problem.
- The most efficient way of reducing any waste is not to produce waste in the first place! Encourage the children to think carefully about being able to finish all their lunch!
- Lunch containers usually produce much permanent waste, unless sandwiches are brought in a re-useable container. Some might wish to bring their lunch in a biodegradable container as a holistic response to the Challenge - paper bags or cardboard containers will rot down easily, but just be aware that some are decorated with plastic paints which can cause a problem. Sandwiches, cake, biscuits and so on can be wrapped in greaseproof or kitchen paper.
- Some bought products (crisps, chocolate bars, pre-packed snacks, etc) have a lot of plastic or foil packaging. This will count against you!
- The biggest problem is drinks, but even this is surmountable. The children might bring a plastic bottle or flask, either of which can be taken home and used again. The little cartons of drink are quite heavy, even when empty!



The Compostable Lunch Challenge

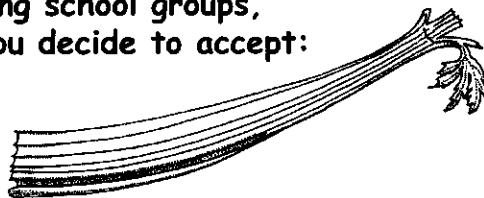
When you bring your class to visit an RHS Garden we expect that you will have a most enjoyable, instructive and inspiring day. However, we want it to be even more than that! We would like to try to highlight to the children just how important plants and gardening are in our lives, and one way we can do this is to include the lunch slot into our learning activities.



Once you have read this leaflet, see if you can spot the one item that is not compostable in this meal.

Each year, we run a Schools' Compostable Lunch Challenge. This Challenge is open to all visiting school groups, and this is what you do, should you decide to accept:

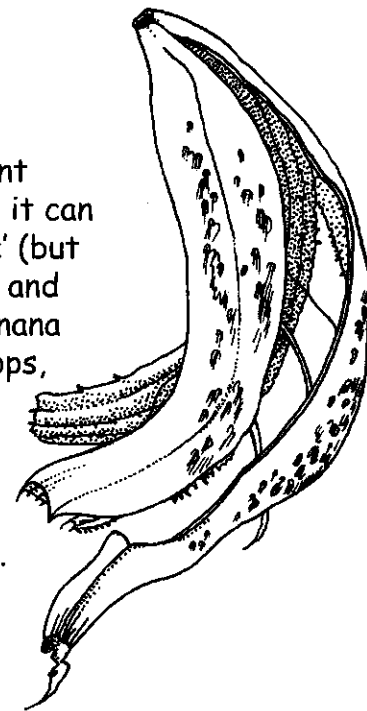
1. discuss the concept of a compostable lunch with your class (see notes below).
2. mention it in the text of a letter about the trip to the parents, and possibly include something for them to tick or cross on the reply slip.
3. remind your class about it from time to time, and especially on the day before the trip.
4. enjoy your class's response to the Challenge on the day, and help them sort their waste if necessary.



Some Background Information

'Compostable' is not a synonym for 'Recyclable'.

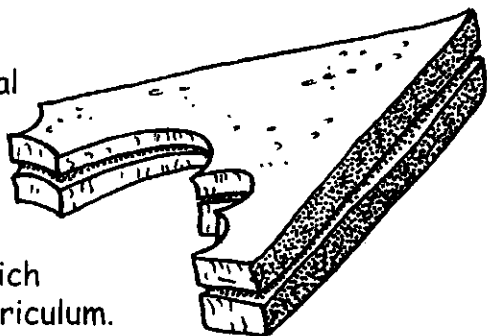
'Compostable' means any plant waste in the broadest sense: it can be vegetable, fruit or 'organic' (but mind this word too!). Vegetable and fruit waste includes apple cores, banana skins, grape stalks, orange peel, carrot tops, tomato stars or any unwanted pieces of food such as celery stalks, cucumber slices and so on. In this context, 'organic' waste includes greaseproof or other paper, kitchen roll, even cardboard. The only natural products we cannot compost are meat, fish, cheese, fat, cake and bread as these may attract vermin.



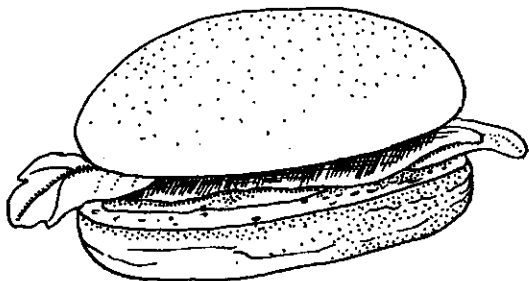
Our Challenge will run yearly, and all participating schools will receive a certificate recording the weight of their permanent waste. At the end of the year, the school that produced the least weight (per pupil) of permanent waste will receive a special prize!



The composting process is a natural one, fundamental to gardening and soil health. This element can be included in your visit if you wish. This activity may stimulate discussion about sustainability, which is now included in the National Curriculum.



Compostable lunches are an ideal way to introduce practical sustainability to your pupils as well as encouraging healthy eating.



Many 'recyclable' products are what we class as 'permanent' waste, as they are often made from plastics. Most plastics will take at least 100 years to degrade and will produce polluting gases as they do so. We have found that children are generally under a misconception about recyclable products; if it can be recycled, does this mean it will be? If it has been recycled from other waste products does this mean that there was no cost to the environment?

