



## Environment in Action (Pre-Field Trip)

We are pleased you'll be participating in the Environment in Action program at our New Earth facility!

The following activities are suggestions to provide background knowledge and prepare students for the upcoming field trip.

### Before the Trip: Activate Knowledge

Inform the students that the class will visit a mulching and composting facility to learn about organics recycling. Discuss what students might experience on the field trip. Highlights will include the following, and more:

- See composting, mulching, soil blending and bagging in action
- Learn how many STEM initiatives are used in a real-world setting
- Understand the roles that New Earth's products and its staff play in our community
- Discuss ideas for recycling and keeping our Earth healthy

Ask students what "organic" means. Stress the meaning of "organic" referring to the larger scientific term (living things) versus "organic" like a food item at the grocery store.

Then introduce the following terms before going on the field trip. You may want to focus on these key words so they are fully recognized during the trip, or you may decide to casually introduce the terms and challenge students to listen on the trip for their use and understanding in context.

**compost** - decomposed or rotted organic material used to help provide nutrients to plants

**mulch** – wood, ground-up in different sizes and sometimes with different coloring added; used to help cover and protect plants from weather and erosion

**organic** – a living or once a living thing or item coming from a living thing; plants, animals and tiny organisms

**inorganic** – things that were never living: rocks, plastic, metal, etc.

**contaminated** – polluted or unusable due to an added chemical or other inorganic problem

**decompose** – to rot or decay like a dried-out plant or a rotting apple

**recycle** – to reuse something in a new way instead of throwing it away

**waste** – a product coming from a living thing that cannot be used including bodily waste or items that living things create and throw away

Finally, have students complete the pre-activity "Recycle or Not?" as individuals or as a group. Look at the results to get an idea of where the group may be in their understanding of both traditional recycling and organic recycling heading into the field trip.

**Answer Key:** New Earth cannot take anything from diapers on down in column 2 and nothing in column 3;

New Earth will take anything in column 1 and up to "diapers" in column 2



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Recycle or Not? (Pre-Field Trip Activity)

Circle each item listed that can recycled organically in the City of San Antonio's Green Bins.

- |                              |                               |                                |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| branches                     | sawdust                       | rocks                          |
| grass clippings              | toothpicks                    | scrap metal                    |
| floral trimmings             | wooden chopsticks             | straws                         |
| houseplants                  | pet waste (no bags)           | Styrofoam ®                    |
| leaves                       | soil or dirt                  | tree stumps                    |
| yard trimmings               | cardboard boxes               | wine corks                     |
| food scraps                  | diapers                       | wood (treated or large pieces) |
| candy (no wrapper)           | cigarette butts               | paint cans                     |
| coffee grounds               | dead animals                  | plastic grocery bags           |
| condiments (no packaging)    | aluminum foil                 | bottle caps                    |
| eggs                         | automotive grease             | garden hose                    |
| eggshells                    | ceramics                      | metal                          |
| fruit                        | microwave popcorn bags        | Christmas tree lights          |
| leftover food (no packaging) | clothing (consider donating)  | boxes w/ tape or glue          |
| tea bags and tea leaves      | cooking grease or oil         | envelopes with clear windows   |
| spoiled foods                | disposable mop sheets         |                                |
| cigarette ashes              | dryer sheets                  |                                |
| paper cups and plates        | glass                         |                                |
| paper napkins and towels     | hazardous waste               |                                |
| pizza boxes                  | motor oil                     |                                |
| cotton balls                 | plastic bags and bottles      |                                |
| dryer lint                   | plastic coated cartons        |                                |
| Popsicle® sticks             | milk and ice cream cartons    |                                |
| shredded paper               | plastic forks, knives, spoons |                                |

**Remember these bin colors:**

GREEN BINS = Organic materials for recycling at New Earth

BLUE BINS = Paper, plastic and glass that can be recycled

BROWN BINS = Trash and garbage that cannot be re-used safely and must be placed in a landfill

