

What Rashaun Learned While Greening His Community's Garden.



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Driving Education Forward



**R**ashaun is a do-gooder who has volunteered to take care of his community's garden. One day while planting vegetables, Rashaun noticed there were no earthworms crawling through the dirt, which worried him since **the presence of earthworms is an indicator of a healthy soil.**



**T**hinking about the easiest way to moisturize the dry sandy soil, Rashaun remembered an illuminating conversation he had about composting with his friend Natalie. Seeking her fresh perspective once again, he invited her over to help brighten up the grim garden.



Once Natalie arrived and looked at all the thirsty plants, she realized that it would take more than Rashaun and herself to solve this problem.

**FACT:** Earthworms are intolerant of drought & frost, & do not like dry sandy soils.

She suggested that they recruit another member of the community to overhaul the garden, and make it suitable for growing organic fruits and vegetables.



**W**ith Michele now in the mix, the group started to clean out the bin of dried up leaves and twigs. Michele offered to share her earthworms and suggested they collectively gather compostable material for the redworms to eat, which will then turn into compost.

Organic matter cover helps reduce the effect of climatic extremes & retains soil moisture.

Worm composting is using worms to recycle organic material into a valuable soil amendment called vermicompost.

Well if compostable material is all we need, than let's go knock on our neighbor's door. I'm sure many of them have trash cans full of kitchen waste - including potato peels.





**A**fter spending months tending to the garden and stirring the composting bin, food began to grow, and plenty of it. The garden became the center of community life and eventually everyone learned about the link between composting and healthy soil, and how earthworms can also help the soil store carbon more efficiently, permanently locking it away.

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## 5 Fun Facts About Earthworms

1. The earthworm is one of nature's top **"soil scientist."**
2. The presence of earthworms is an indicator of a healthy soil system.
3. Earthworms can increase emissions from soil. But worms can also help the soil store carbon more efficiently, permanently locking it away.
4. Earthworms do not like acid soil with Ph (**CaCl<sub>2</sub>**) less than 4.5.
5. Earthworms are major decomposers of dead and decomposing organic matter, and derive their nutrition from the bacteria and fungi that grow upon these materials.

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