

# ready, set, Go Outside!

**Nature's Tiny Recyclers.** In a forest, creatures of all shapes and sizes do their part to reuse decaying tree branches or logs on the ground. Over a few years in a healthy ecosystem, they work together to change a log into rich soil—thus recycling it and providing a healthy habitat for a new tree to grow.

## Parent/Teacher Note

**Skills Learned:** Observation and comparison: camouflage, food chains, habitat, nutrient cycling, and decomposition.

## Join the Recycling Team

Turn your non-meat food waste—apple cores, onion skins, eggshells, etc—into compost. It's easy and fun to create a composting system in your backyard or kitchen. Doing so will reduce your household trash, give worms and bacteria food to eat, and provide your family with a rich and useful addition for your garden soil or house plants!

Learn how to compost by visiting the Cornell University composting webpage at [www.css.cornell.edu/compost/Composting\\_homepage.html](http://www.css.cornell.edu/compost/Composting_homepage.html).

## Woodland Quest

Visit a forest or wooded park and search for a decaying log on the forest floor. Look closely. You'll likely see creatures moving around inside the log. Beetles, slugs, and millipedes will use a dead log as an apartment—and eat it too! In fact, even smaller creatures, including bacteria and fungi, which you may not see, also snack on logs. This is one way that nature recycles. How many different critters can you find recycling a dead log on the ground?

