

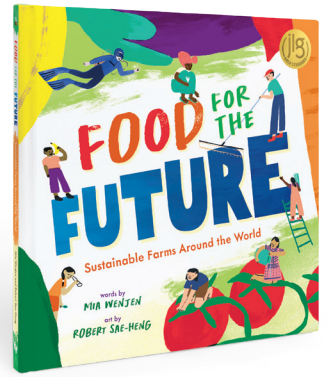


## Food for the Future Discussion Guide

Written by Mia Wenjen, author of *Food for the Future*

In the book, *Food for the Future*, we learn about “sustainable” farms around the world. These are farms that grow food without using too much energy, water or harmful chemicals, and without harming the habitats of animals who live nearby.

1. Have you ever visited a farm? What was it like? What did you buy or eat there?
2. Have you ever taken care of a plant or garden? What was that like?
3. Do you think fruit and vegetables that you grow yourself taste better? Why or why not?
4. A plant needs water and food just like we do, and it gets its food from the sun and soil. Sometimes soil runs out of nutrients, or the “good stuff” that plants need to grow. What can we do to make soil healthy and fertile again?
5. Do you think we can grow enough food on our planet to feed everyone? What about in areas where there is not enough rain or healthy soil or it’s too hot?
6. What was your favorite farm in this book? Which farm would you most like to visit and why?
7. Do you have an idea for an unusual farm? Can you describe it or draw it? How would it work?



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Illustrated by Robert Sae-Heng

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## Food for the Future Activity: Grow Your Own Veggies

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You've read about sustainable farms around the world – and you can grow veggies too! You can garden on a small patch of land or even in pots.

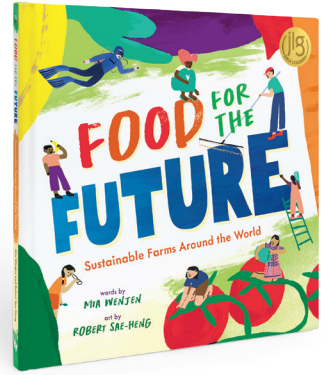
### GROW A VEGGIE OR HERB FROM SEEDS

Do you want to try growing herbs and vegetables from seeds? You can use seeds that you gather yourself from vegetables or have a grownup purchase seeds from a store.



#### You will need:

- About two dozen paper cups, such as 3-ounce Dixie cups
- A tray, such as a 9-by-13-inch baking tray
- Potting soil
- Something to poke a hole in the paper cup, such as a wooden skewer
- Seeds



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1. Take about two dozen paper cups and poke a hole in the bottoms using the skewer. You might need a grownup to help you.
2. Fill each paper cup about  $\frac{2}{3}$  full with potting soil.
3. Place 1–3 seeds in each paper cup.
4. Place the paper cups into your tray.
5. Water each cup until the water runs out of the hole in the bottom of each cup and onto the tray.
6. Place your tray in a sunny location and water your cups daily.
7. When the seeds sprout and get 2–3 inches tall, transfer to a pot or a garden.

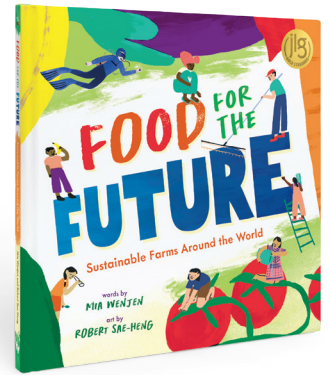
## GROW A POTATO IN A JAR

If growing from seeds seems challenging, try growing a potato instead!

### You will need:

- A potato
- A glass or jar
- Six toothpicks
- Water
- A pot filled with potting soil or a garden

1. Take a potato that has started to sprout and stick six toothpicks around the potato, two thirds up from where the potato is sprouting the most.
2. Place the potato in a glass of water so that the bottom is submerged.
3. Place the potato in a sunny spot.
4. Check every few days to see if you need to add more water.
5. Once you can see 2 to 3 inches (5 to 7.5 centimeters) of roots, have a grownup help you cut the potato into smaller chunks so that each chunk has a root.
6. Plant the potato pieces in a pot or a garden that gets plenty of sun.
7. Water your potato plants as needed.
8. Watch your potatoes grow for about three months, and then harvest!



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## GROW GREEN ONIONS (EASIEST ONE EVER!)

### You will need:

- The root ends at the bottom of green onions
- A shallow bowl
- Water
- Pot or garden

1. Place the root ends in a shallow bowl so the roots are covered by the water.
2. When the green onion sprouts new leaves and more roots, transplant to a pot or a garden.
3. Water and watch your green onions grow. Harvest them when they get big.

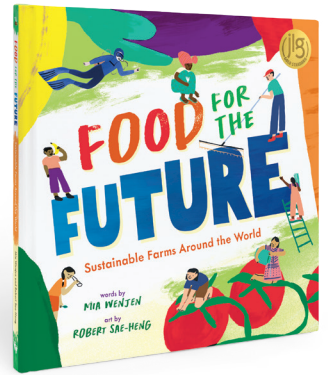
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## MAKE INSTANT COMPOST

### You will need:

- Food scraps (but not pits or seeds that might get stuck)
- Blender or food processor

1. Have a grown up help you fill the blender or food processor with the food scraps. Fill about half way up.
2. Fill about one quarter of the blender with water.
3. Have a grown up help you puree until smooth.
4. Carefully pour into a garden or pots.



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## ***Food for the Future* Activity: Plant for Pollinators**

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Plants can create seeds so that new plants can grow. One of the reasons we need plants to create new seeds is so that we can keep planting and growing food! Many plants can only create seeds if they receive pollen from another plant. If you look closely inside a blooming flower, you might notice something that looks like colorful dust. That's pollen!

How do plants get pollen from other plants? From pollinators! A pollinator is a living thing that moves pollen from one place to another. We need pollinators for growing almost all of the food we eat.

Two pollinators you might have seen are honeybees and monarch butterflies. It's important to keep them healthy so they can do their important work! Ready to help them out?

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### **Plant a Garden for the Honeybees and Monarch Butterflies**

#### **WHERE CAN I PLANT A GARDEN?**

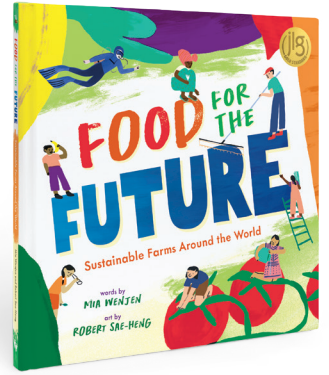
There are many options, such as:

- A patch of dirt in a park, playground or school
- A garden plot such as a community garden or home garden
- A pot placed outside

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#### **WHAT DO HONEYBEES NEED?**

- **Water:** Can you provide a bird bath or other fresh water source?
- **Flowering Plants:** Bees need nectar from flowers. This includes all sorts of flowers, from dandelions, to herbs and vegetables. Some of their favorite flowers include Bee Balm, Purple Coneflower, Black-eyed Susan, Joe-pye Weed, Lavender, Hollyhocks, Mint, Borage, Asters and Yarrow.
- **Sand or a Bee House:** Some native bees don't live in hives but make their own homes underground or in dead tree stumps.
- **No Pesticides:** Some pesticides are harmful to bees so please don't use any. Weed by hand instead.



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## WHAT DO MONARCH BUTTERFLIES NEED?



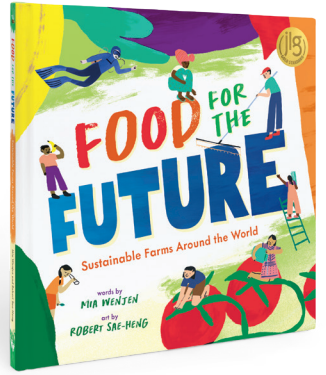
The butterfly garden at Cold Spring Park in Newton, MA

- **Milkweed:** This is the only food source for young monarch butterflies, also known as caterpillars! Save Our Monarchs is a nonprofit that helps the monarch butterflies. They sell milkweed seeds too!

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## LEARN ABOUT BEES

- Did you know that there are around 4,000 species of bees in North America, and many of them are completely different from the bees we normally picture when we think of bees?
- Native bees help pollinate not only the flowers that make our gardens pretty, but also cherry trees, apples, squash, watermelons and many other fruits and vegetables that we eat.
- Bees are responsible for pollinating more than 75% of the world's crops.
- Most of our native bees are solitary. (That means they like to be alone.)



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