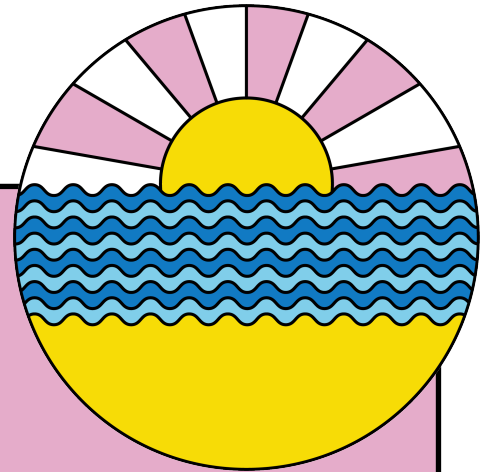


Balance in Nature

Grow Torah



Tu B'Shevat is coming, and it marks what is often referred to as “The Jewish New Year for Trees.” It separates one year from the next for certain Torah laws related to trees and their fruit. We celebrate this holiday with nature-based activities and tasting a variety of fruits! In today’s morning blessing, we remember the third day of creation when we say thank you to G-d “Who spreads earth above the waters.” This is a daily reminder that nature has a proper balance and Tu B'Shevat is our annual reminder to reinforce that balance. Let’s learn about the balance in nature this Tu B'Shevat, celebrating and showing gratitude with these activities.

We are grateful to our partner, Grow Torah, for preparing this activity.



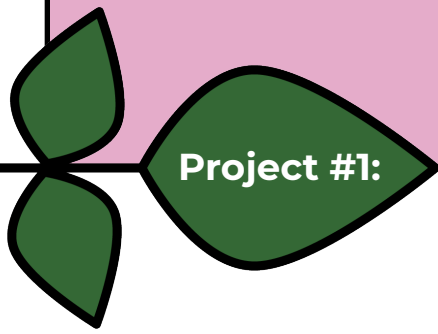
#gratitudedays

Days of Gratitude



gratitudedays.com





Compost

Project #1:

One powerful way that we can show our appreciation for the earth is by treating it well and giving it treats, just like we receive so many gifts from it. Composting is our favorite gift to the earth! Recycling food scraps will provide nutrients to the soil and make it healthier. So let's get started in your backyard!

Instructions:

- Composting requires three main ingredients: greens, browns, and water.
- Choose a shaded spot near a water source for your compost pile or bin.
- Save your food scraps from meals to put in your compost bin. These will be your greens, otherwise known as your source of nitrogen.
- Gather dried leaves, woodchips, newspaper, and cardboard for your browns —your carbon source.
- Add alternating layers of brown and green materials to your compost, making sure larger pieces are chopped or shredded and aiming for equal parts greens and browns.
- Lightly moisten dry materials as they are added.
- Once your compost pile is established, mix grass clippings and green waste into the pile and bury fruit and vegetable waste under ten inches of compost material.
- Optional: Cover the top of the compost with a tarp to keep it moist. When the material at the bottom is dark and rich in color, your compost is ready to use. This usually takes anywhere between two months to two years, depending on what you put in and how small you chop your materials.
- Use finished compost to add nutrients to any soil! You're doing a great job of putting those leftover nutrients to good use!

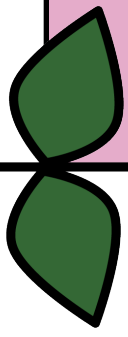
Pause for Gratitude:

Take a moment to feel gratitude for how amazing it is that the world works the way that it does. It is not obvious that throwing all of this “trash” into a pile will be able to create such amazing food for our soil. Look around your neighborhood; what other happenings in nature are you so grateful for?

Supplemental Resources:

1. Sefaria: [GrowTorah Compost Source Sheet](#)
2. Article: [Why Do We Pray Like Farmers? Reconnecting to Our Roots on Tu B'Shevat.](#)





Project #2:

Terrarium

Let's gain a stronger understanding of the ecosystem and how intertwined everything and everyone in the world is by building a terrarium! This is a self-sustaining sealed container to grow plants in. Try it out!

Instructions:

- Choose a glass container that has a seal.
- For layer #1: Fill the bottom of your container with pebbles.
- For layer #2: Add soil in an equal amount to the pebbles (can be from bagged soil, or you can take from your yard or a friend's yard with permission).
- Add plants! You can dig up some moss or other weeds, or purchase some small, young plants.
- Water! Water your terrarium. This water will recreate Earth's water cycle within your terrarium. If you see condensation in your terrarium in the morning and evening, that's perfect! If you see condensation all day long, open the cap to let some water evaporate out.
- Leave your terrarium on a sunny windowsill. Plants create oxygen and carbon dioxide and will cycle it throughout the space. If any critters show up in your terrarium, they can live off the oxygen that the plants produce.
- Watch your terrarium grow!

Pause for Gratitude:

What's happening in your terrarium is a mini version of what happens on planet Earth every day. Water, air, plants, and more work together to create a healthy place for us to live. Watch your terrarium over the next few weeks to get a close-up look at all the beauty that happens inside.

