

Chapter 6

Jack Sprout Meets Early Worm

“Well if you don't know anything about soil, you're not going to be a very good farmer,” said Early. “Go over by that shade tree and wait. I'll be over as soon as I can get everyone calmed down and back to work.”

Early got his workers calmed down, crawled over to the shade tree and sat on a twig.

“I can't stay up here very long,” he said. “It's too hot. Too much sun and we'll dry up and die. We're only above ground at night or if it rains too much and our tunnels get flooded. I'm going to talk very fast. Are you a good listener, Jack Sprout?”

“Just look at these ears,” I said.

“Yeah, I see 'em'. Okay, here it goes. Soil is alive like you and me. It needs fresh air, food and water just like we do. My workers and I crawl around underground to make tunnels so fresh air and rain water can flow through. We eat dead roots, sticks, leaves, food bits, old soil and stuff like that. We digest it in our stomachs then cast out what's left. It's called worm castings and it's good fertilizer for the soil.”

“We'll come to your farm, make some tunnels and leave our worm castings when you're ready for us. That's it. Goodbye, good luck, see ya later.” Early then wiggled back to his hole and disappeared. I ran over to the hole and yelled down.