

Compost in a bucket



Introduction

Soil is one of the earth's most precious natural resources. It is composed of rocks, minerals, living organisms, and organic matter. Organic matter in soil comes from the decomposition of plants and animals. Minerals in soil are needed for plant growth. The nutrient cycle, which converts dead plants or animal tissue into a form that can be absorbed by new plants and animals, is essential to all life on earth. Tiny microscopic animals in the soil eat and transform the dead tissues of plants and animals into nutrients easily absorbed by plants. These bacteria are the most numerous creatures in the world. One handful of soil can contain five billion creatures, as many as all the people in the world. Composting is the process people use to convert organic materials to a rich soil amendment. It happens anywhere there is sufficient organic matter, moisture, and air to nurture the microscopic bacteria, fungi, and other organisms that decompose organic matter.

Objectives

Students will be able to

- make compost in a bucket in the home/classroom
- record their observations over 2–4 weeks
- gain an understanding of life cycles, decomposition, and organic materials
- identify various decomposer animals in their bucket

Eco-School Steps – Curriculum linkages, Audit, Inform and Involve
Curriculum Linkages – Environmental Studies



Time required/Duration

Classroom session 1: 30 minutes for introducing the concept

Resources required

- Vegetable and fruit scraps
- Used tea leaves
- Leftover or spoiled food
- Large bucket with lid
- Trowel
- Leaves or cut grass





Home assignment

- Save your vegetable scraps, such as banana peels, potato skins, and rotten tomatoes, in a bucket. Don't save meat, bones, fat, cheese, milk, or any other animal products. Don't save plastics, glass, or paper either—these are recycled in other ways.
- Select an appropriate place to age the vegetable material in your bucket. Look for a shaded, sheltered area to place the bucket.
- When the bucket is about half full, take it out to your selected compost area. Spread out a thin layer of kitchen waste, then top with leaves or grass.
- Build up your compost pile by adding a new layer of waste each time your bucket of vegetable scraps is half full. Be sure to always top the pile with leaves or grass.
- Sprinkle the compost lightly with water every few days. Don't soak the pile, just dampen it.
- Turn the contents of the bucket every 15 days.
- The compost will be ready in 3-4 months.
- Take it out and spread in your garden.

Follow up questions

1. Ask the students how much time did it take for the wet waste to turn into compost?
2. Ask the students about other things that can be composted?