

Composting and Decomposers

Supplies needed:

- Soil
- Produce- Lettuce, carrots, fruits, or vegetables
- Plastic bag
- Canning jars
- Nylon pantyhose
- Rubber bands
- Plastic spoons
- Spray bottle of water
- Tape & marker for labeling the jar



1. Place 2 to 3 inches of soil in the bottom of the jars.
2. In one jar place produce on top of the soil. In another jar, place cut-up pieces of the plastic bag.
3. Stir the contents of the jars with a plastic spoon to mix the scraps into the soil.
4. Lightly spray the contents of the jars with water. Use tape & a marker to label these jars 'Produce' and 'Plastic'. Cover jars with a piece of pantyhose and use a rubber band around the lid mouth.
5. Place the jars in a windowsill.
6. Shake the jars every few days and observe the contents.
7. After a few weeks, discuss how composting works. Explain the decomposers need environments in which to live and thrive. Decomposers need air, sun light, and moisture to move in and do their job. When you build compost piles, they need to be mixed regularly and exposed to the elements so they can gain moisture. Compost piles can be in the sun or the shade but putting it in the sun will make the composting process speed up. Sun helps increase the temperature, so the bacteria and fungi work faster. Your pile will also dry out faster in full sun so partial shade may help keep the pile moist (think of the forest floor). Discuss how table organic material like the produce will decompose over time, where inorganic materials such as the plastic bag do not and are harmful to the environment.

