



H. Crazy Compost



Previous Step: Secrets of the Soil

BY THE END OF THIS MONTH, PUPILS WILL HAVE:

- Understood the process of composting;
- Learned about the role of microorganisms in the soil and the cycle of materials;
- Learned to sort different materials for making compost;
- Recycled materials for composting;
- Collected organic waste for composting;
- Built a compost bin.



FROM RUBBISH TO COMPOSTING...

1. Compost...

is used to enrich the soil with nutrients and moisture. It is glorious as it is full of minerals and organic matter which is derived from the mulching and decomposing of other materials we no longer use.

2. Key Ideas...

compost is a mixture of materials which are brought together thanks to the demolishing actions of living organisms (both physical breaking and chemical transformations).

In particular, organisms in the soil (worms, bacteria, fungi) have the important function of breaking bigger molecules into smaller ones which pass into solution into the soil and can be absorbed by the plants (cycling of matter).

For good and effective composting action, we need organisms in the soil, plus water, air, sun and other plants (as the roots of the plants can help too!).

ACTIVITY 2: Cards illustrating different organisms and environmental factors can be taken into class for children to learn about and recognise.

Drama-based activities can be used to illustrate the work of the different organisms in the soil and the interaction between the different elements.





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3. Is compost a bit like recycling?

Yes... and no...

as not everything can be put into the mix for making compost.

Paper and cardboard are good as they can be shredded and once in the soil, they are good for retaining moisture.

Some food produce such as **egg shells** can also be used but not food waste, as it attracts rats near to the household.

Plastic and glass will be discarded as normal into the recycling bin.

ACTIVITY 3A: Sets of pictures showing waste products in common use can be used to practice the process of 'sorting out' waste for composting. The first distinction is between 'organic' (contains Carbon, good for growth) and 'inorganic' (it contains other minerals but not Carbon; it may contain other elements such as Nitrogen and Sulphur).



The sorting activity stimulates children to think in greater detail about 'rubbish' as the undifferentiated material of which we ignore the origin or destiny. They are guided to 'make categories' for practical use:

- **Brown bin:** for food waste which is not good in compost as it attracts rats and mice or because it would take too long to decompose.
- **Recycling bins:** for cardboard, plastic and glass.
- **General waste:** for all things that cannot be recycled.



Compost is a special category which is made of organic waste such as garden waste, vegetable remains but not cooked food; adding paper and cardboard can help to retain water and give texture, air and cohesion to the mulch.

Ideas related to this can be linked backwards to the soil analysis conducted before.

ACTIVITY 3B: Children in the whole school can collect organic produce for composting in each of their classes from fruit snacks etc.

ACTIVITY 3C: With the help of the janitors and/or school technicians or parents, children can help build a compost bin for use in the garden.





H. Crazy Compost Across the Curriculum

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

- engages children and young people and takes account of their views and experiences, particularly where decisions are to be made that may impact on **life choices**
- uses a variety of approaches including **active, cooperative and peer learning** and effective use of technology
- encourages children and young people to act as **positive role models** for others within the educational community
- leads to a lasting commitment in children and young people to follow a **healthy lifestyle** by participation in experiences which are **varied, relevant, realistic, and enjoyable**
- helps to foster **health in families and communities** through work with a range of professions, parents and carers, and children and young people, and enables them to understand the responsibilities of citizenship

SCIENCES

- develop **curiosity** and understanding of the environment and **my place in the living, material and physical world**
- demonstrate a secure knowledge and understanding of the **big ideas** and concepts of the sciences
- develop **skills for learning, life and work**
- develop skills in the **accurate use of scientific language**, formulae and equations
- apply **safety measures** and take necessary actions to control risk and hazards
- recognise the impact the sciences make on **my life**, the lives of others, the environment and on society

SOCIAL SUBJECTS AND TECHNOLOGY

- engage in activities which encourage enterprising attitudes
- develop an understanding of concepts that stimulate enterprise and influence business
- food and textile technologies
- designing & constructing models/products
- exploring uses of materials

EXPRESSIVE ARTS AND ENGLISH

- experiences in the expressive arts involve creating and presenting and are practical and experiential
- evaluating and appreciating are used to enhance enjoyment and develop knowledge and understanding
- extend and enrich my vocabulary through listening, talking, watching and reading