

Garden Adventures camp: Create your own Composter

Building, Analyzing, and Creating Compost

There are many ways to create compost. One is vermicomposting. Worms and other invertebrates are the decomposers breaking down the organic matter. Another type, which we will be making today, is aerobic compost. As microorganisms break down the organic matter, it will get hot in the middle. Bugs can still be found on the outside and edges of an aerobic compost pile. This session introduces you to composting and how food scraps contribute to rich soil composition. You then will be able to incorporate into daily routine contributing food scraps to a family compost.

Materials:

A couple of days' worth of food scraps: fruit and vegetable peels, tea bags, coffee grounds, raw leftovers, coffee filters, stale bread/pita chips/tortillas, etc.

2- One or two liter bottles Soil Water spray bottle Plastic lid or tub for saucer (mayo, peanut butter, etc.)

Making the compost:

1. Remove labels and rinse your soda bottles. Cut off the top end of both bottles. Make sure one of the tops has a much larger diameter than the other. Save the larger top. Also save the 2nd bottle, it will be a Bug Hotel.
2. Throw a handful of soil into the bottom of the bottle. Follow this with a handful of food scraps.
3. Spray with water to add moisture into the soil (If the soil is real dry then pour in a small amount of water). Next invert onto this bottle the larger bottle top that you cut off.
4. Punch a few holes in the sides and bottom with a large nail or sharp scissors. Do this carefully!
5. Set your composter in a lid or saucer in case water leaks out.

You'll quickly learn that your food scraps turn into nutrient-rich soil. At home, set your Bug Hotel next to your compost so bugs that can use it as their kitchen can move on in! Don't forget to keep "feeding" the soil with food scraps!

Post Activity: As the bottle compost grows, find a larger space to continue composting and recycling your food scraps. You can then use compost for planting a container or raised garden.

