

COMPOST JARS

Overview and objective:

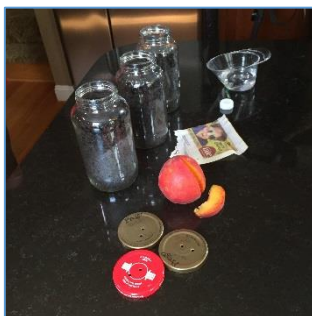
To measure the length of time it takes for different materials to decompose in soil.

Composting is nature's process of recycling decomposed organic materials into a rich soil known as compost. Compost allows nutrients in organic material to return to the soil and enrich it for plant growth in the future.

Source: <http://www.recycleworks.org/compost/>

Procedure:

1. Start by asking an adult to use a nail and hammer to poke a hole in each jar lid
2. Fill each jar three-quarters full of potting soil and place the peach slice, the bottle cap and the piece of newspaper into each respective jar. Be sure to push each material close to the edge of the jar so you can watch and document the decomposition process thoroughly.
3. Place each jar in a sunny location, like a windowsill, and add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of water to each jar every couple of days.
4. Label each jar with the material inside and begin to document the results.
5. Throughout the decomposition process, continually examine each jar and mark the number of days that pass.



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WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- Three mason or sauce jars with lids
- A peach slice
- A piece of newspaper
- Tape
- Marker or pen
- A plastic lid from a water bottle
- Hammer and nail
(Please have adult use these tools!)
- Potting Soil
- Water
- A planting pot
- Safety goggles
- Safety gloves
- Adult supervision



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Discussion:

- Which material is taking the longest to decompose? Which is decomposing fastest?
- What impact does adding water have on the decomposition process?

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