

Indoor Activity: Starting a Compost Bucket

To start a thriving compost bin you need the right balance of materials. Compost is composed of Greens, Browns, and Water. Greens include materials such as grass clippings, vegetable waste, fruit scraps, and coffee grounds. Browns include materials such as dead leaves, twigs, and branches. You should have equal parts browns and greens as browns provide carbon and greens provide nitrogen. With the addition of water, the materials begin to breakdown. This environment encourages the growth of beneficial bacteria to create nutrient rich material for healthy soil.

Benefits

- Learning how decomposition works.
- Fun for all ages!
- Produce healthy soil for your yard, plants, or gardens.

Supplies

- Plastic Storage Bin
- Dirt
- Drill (or other tool that can make holes.)
- Browns
- Greens
- Water



What to do

- Start by drilling drain holes in the plastic bin. (Be sure to ask for help from an adult!)
- Once the holes are drilled you create a dry layer using dry leaves.
- Over the leaves fill the bucket halfway with dirt.
- On top you will place the greens you can find in your home.
- Mix the materials together.
- Moisten the mixture with lukewarm water.

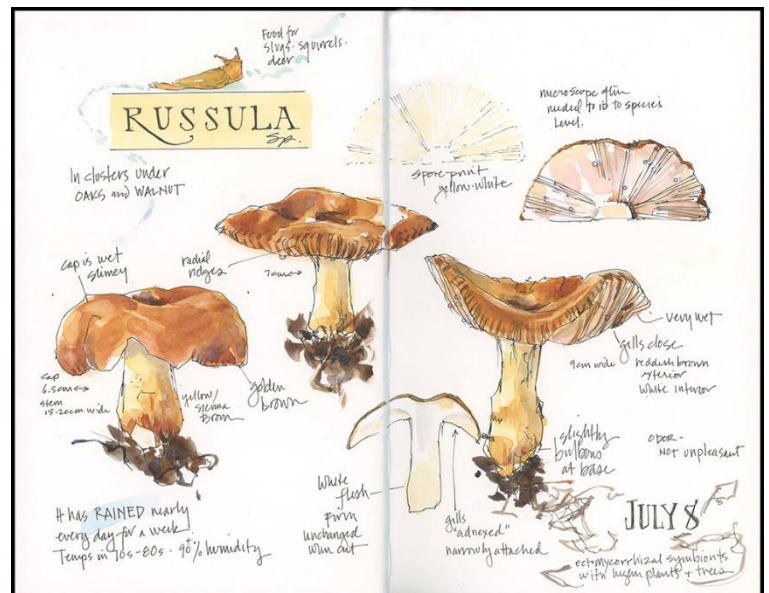
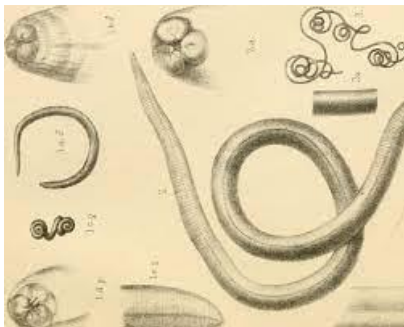
Once the materials in your container are broken down and has an earthy or dirt like aroma the compost bin is ready to be used for topsoil.

*Adding eggshells to you compost can add calcium to the mixture!

Outdoor Activity: Decomposer Cataloging

Supplies

- Notebook
- Writing Utensils
- Close-Toed Shoes
- Adult Supervision
- Sunscreen
- Weather Appropriate Clothing



The best way to learn about the organisms around us is to observe them in their natural habitat. For this activity go on a hike in your area and see what decomposers you can find living there. When you find an organism title a page in your notebook and draw a sketch of it. Once you finish sketching write a description of what you see and the area around it. Be as detailed as possible in both your drawing and your description.

When you get home do research on the organisms you found to see if you can add to you catalog pages.

*Fungi are a very efficient decomposer. To learn more about their taxonomy follow this [Link](#) to the US Fish and Wildlife Service website.