

Cut & Paste Compost

OBJECTIVE: To illustrate what can and cannot be added to a compost pile.

MATERIALS: arts and crafts materials, **HANDOUTS:** Composter (E27), This And That (E28), In Or Out (E29)

VOCABULARY: compost, composting, dairy products, pile

BACKGROUND:

Composting is easy to do once a person knows what should and should not be placed in a pile. Stories about odour and pest problems fail to mention these problems occur because of incorrect materials being added to a pile. This activity will provide a simple explanation of what is right and wrong for a backyard composter or pile.

PROCEDURE:

1. Ask the children if anyone knows what composting is. Have the children who compost at home raise their hands.
2. Explain how composting turns waste into dirt. Mention that not all waste can be put in a compost pile. Some waste attracts rats and other pests, some waste is hazardous to people and some waste will not turn into dirt. Tell the class they are going to learn what can and cannot be composted.
3. Discuss with the class the items on **HANDOUT: This And That** (E28). Vegetables and fruits can go into a compost pile. Wood, twigs, paper and sawdust are good for composting too. Hair, leaves, straw along with cotton and wool rags are also acceptable.
4. Give each child a copy of **HANDOUT: Composter** (E27). Tell the children this is their composter and they are going to fill it with waste.
5. Things that are not good for a compost pile include dairy products (cheese, milk, butter, etc.), meats, bones and fats. Chicken and fish are not good either. Mayonnaise, salad dressings, peanut butter and vegetable oil are also bad. Discuss the good and bad items with the children. Be sure to tell the class that if a good item has been fried or covered in a bad item the good item is no longer acceptable. (i.e. fried vegetables are not acceptable).
6. Have the children colour all the items on the **HANDOUT: In Or Out** (E29). After the colouring is finished, each child is to cut out the things they think are acceptable and attach them to their composter.

Cut & Paste Compost (cont.)

EXTENSION:

1. Make a bulletin board displaying the finished composters.
2. Using modelling clay, have each child make one thing that is acceptable in a composter.
3. Have the children make a list of items that are good for the composter and a list of items that are not good. This list can be put on their fridge at home.

EVALUATION:

1. Ask each child to name one thing that can or cannot be placed in a composter.
2. Will the children take time to participate in home composting?
3. Ask the children to tell the class where they think the two "wrong items" from page E29 should be.