

How to GET GROWING!



Background Information

Making the compost is only the start of a process and letting children see how it can be used helps to complete the cycle. Making compost helps reduce the amount of organic waste that ends up in the bin. There is also an advantage in using compost as a growing medium as it reduces the need to extract peat thereby conserving peat bogs, which are a fast disappearing habitat.

What is peat?

Peat is made of partially decomposed plant remains, which accumulate in waterlogged soils over thousands of years. Peat forms when the natural processes of decay are prevented by the acidic water logging and depleted oxygen.

The way peat is formed creates unique and fragile ecosystems, with many highly adapted plant and animal species found only on peat bogs. (Peatland plants are adapted to survive in nutrient poor conditions.)

Home composting can help.

Home composting is probably the best alternative to peat. Garden compost is a renewable resource made from waste products. It helps to reduce the green waste, going to landfill, and unlike peat it is full of nutrients and returns organic matter to the soil in a useful form.

THIS ACTIVITY TAKES 2 WEEKS TO COMPLETE

Teaching Activity

1. Discuss what the children think plants need to grow.
2. Talk about the uses of compost, why do we bother making compost?
3. Ask them to think about peat bogs and the type of habitat they are helping to protect by using compost.
4. Using a fork, go out to the compost bin and collect some compost. Transfer it to a bucket.
5. Get each child to put on a pair of gloves and use their hands to transfer a little compost into the egg box holes.
6. Follow the pupil worksheet
7. Observe the seeds over a 2 week period

Science

QCA Links

Unit 2B Plants + animals in the local environment

Section 5 – Growing seeds

Learning Objectives. Children should learn:

- to turn ideas of their own, about what plants need to begin to grow, into a form that can be tested
- to observe and make a day-by-day record of observations
- to use the results to draw a conclusion about what seeds need to begin to grow and decide whether this is what they expected
- that seeds produce new plants

Learning Outcomes. Children -

- suggest how they should plant seeds in *eg soil or water* and what they should see if they grow
- with help, produce a record of their observations and say what this shows
- state that seeds grow into plants
- explain that seeds need water, but not necessarily soil, to begin to grow

Equipment

- ✓ Compost
- ✓ (with worms removed)
- ✓ Protective gloves
- ✓ Egg boxes
- ✓ Garden fork
- ✓ Scissors
- ✓ Bucket



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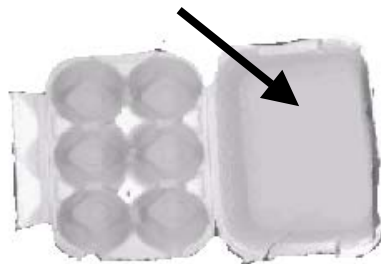
How to GET GROWING!



Group/Name: _____

Work with a partner and carefully follow the instructions below.

1. Take an egg carton and write your name on the inside of the lid.



2. Put on some gloves to keep your hands clean.
3. With your gloves on fill the holes in the egg box with compost from the bucket in the classroom.

Why is using home compost better than using peat compost?

4. Plant your seeds by sprinkling them on top of the compost.
5. Water then only a little and place them on the windowsill.
6. Wait until your seeds start to sprout!

What do your seeds need to grow?

7. Draw your tray below.

date	date	date