LIFE CYCLES

Background

Compost and the process of composting supports may life cycles, through providing nutrition, a natural growing media and a habitat. With all year round access, the compost bin makes a good starting point for studying these life cycles.

Compost can support the life cycle of plants, by providing nutrition and a natural growing media. Considering how compost can be used to help plants grow and develop provides a good starting point for the further study of plant life cycles.

Compost also supports the life cycle of many animals, such as woodlice and ladybirds, by providing a home and food. Woodlice spend the whole of their life in the compost bin, whereas ladybirds can begin their life cycle as larvae feeding on the green leaf materials before moving further a-field as the mature adult.

Curriculum links: Sc2 3d. QCA Unit 5B

Life Cycles

Leaning objectives:

Children will learn

- The life cycle of flowering plants, (including pollination, fertilisation and seed dispersal) and how compost can be used to support this life cycle.
- The life cycle of some of the invertebrates found in the compost bin.

Learning Outcome:

Children will have

- Considered the life cycle of an apple tree and some the actions we can take to support it's life cycle.
- Studied one life cycle in depth and communicated their learning through a simple drama.

Teaching Activity

Some background knowledge of the life cycle of plants for this activity is useful.

1. As a whole class, use the power-point provided to establish the lifecycle of an apple tree. For each step in the life cycle, ask a child to step forward to 'act' out that stage. For example for the life-stage 'seed' ask a child to curl up and make themselves as compact as possible.
2. Demonstrate how this life cycle could be represented as a simple flow-chart on an A3 page.
3. Split the class into four (or eight groups).
4. Allocate each group one of the plant or animal life cycle to study. Hand out the appropriate cards,
5. The groups now sort out the cards into the correct order for a life cycle.
6. Next the group draw a poster communicating their life cycle.
7. The group also need to plan and rehearse how they will act out their life cycle.
8. When all groups are ready, bring the class back together.
9. Each group performs their life cycle in turn. Which creature are they?

Resources

- A set of life cycle cards for: Pear tree, Horse Chestnut, Worm and Woodlouse (including picture cards)
- A3 plain paper for posters. Crayons, pencils, pens.
- Worm bin