Compost Critter Observation

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Objective: Observe nature's recyclers and see how nature composts materials

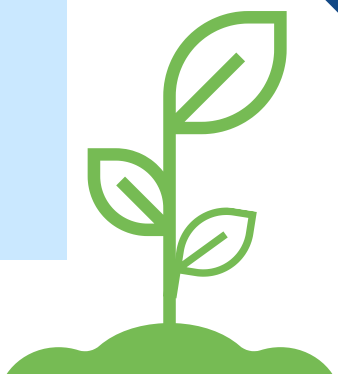
We can make compost in our own backyard, but what does nature do when it comes to breaking down organic matter? Nature has their own recycling team!

Materials like logs, leaves, and soil can break down with the help of certain insects. When you look in the right place, you can observe nature's recyclers in action.

Supplies Needed

-An outdoor area with some of the following: trees, (dead or living) fallen logs, rocks, leaf litter, or mushrooms

There are many species of bugs and microorganisms that help with composting nature's materials!.



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Keep Greater Milwaukee Beautiful

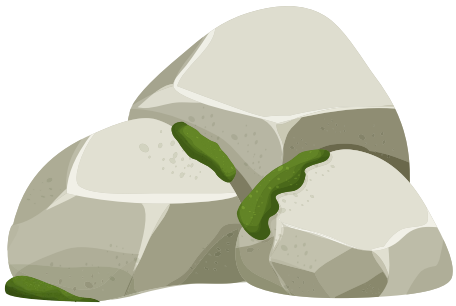
Remember to be respectful of all critters during observation!

1. Start with trees or fallen logs. Observe the bark and its crevices.

Questions to Consider:

-Will the tree or log live forever?
-What is all over the bark?
-What insects are underneath?

2. Next find large rocks to look under. Observe the surface of the rock and the habitat around and under it.



Questions to Consider:

-What is the soil like under the rock?
-Why do insects live underneath?

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3. Last find some leaf litter to observe. Fallen leaves on the ground work best.

Questions to Consider:

-Have some of the leaves decomposed?
-How are the fallen leaves different from the ones still on the trees?
-Will these decaying leaves help the soil?

Share and dicsuss!

Work together with friends during the observation to share ideas! Nature's recyclers are everywhere!

Source: https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2015-09/documents/qfl_complete.pdf

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