



Gardening and Composting

Materials

- Seeds or small plants
- Soil
- Shovel
- Gloves
- Container
- Food scraps/yard waste

Instructions

1 Pick out some seeds or seedling plants that you will want to have in your garden. Plant them in a good area where you can easily access so to care for them. Make sure that you pick plants that will do well in the area you are planting. Some plants need specific types of soil, amount of sunlight or water.

2 Care for your garden, making sure to water and weed it. You will need to water the seeds or seedlings a lot at first. Keep an eye on the plants to see how they are growing. You can record your observations in a nature journal. Gardens not only help us by creating food for us to eat but they help make oxygen from carbon dioxide through a process called **photosynthesis**. They can also create food and shelter for wildlife and attract pollinators like bees and butterflies.

3 Plants need good soil to grow in and one way to make good soil is to create compost. **Compost** is organic material that you add to soil to help plants grow. Begin composting by collecting food scraps like cores of apples, unused parts of vegetables, or coffee grounds. You can use a container to hold this until you can deposit them in your compost pile. You can add yard waste like grass clippings and twigs to your compost pile too. Do not put meat or dairy products in your compost pile or yard waste that has been treated with chemicals as this will not compost well and hurt the soil you are trying to make.

4 Find a shady, dry area for your compost pile and add the food scraps and yard waste making sure you break up any big pieces. To help it along you can moisten the pile as you add. Once the pile has been started you can mix up the pile and make sure the food scraps are covered by the compost. When the material is dark and rich in color after about a few months or years it is ready to be used as soil in your garden.

5 Compost is good because it frees up space in our already crowded landfills and reduces the amount of greenhouse gases produced. It also ensures that plants get proper nutrients and helps them grow without having to buy expensive fertilizer.