

Compost Column

BOTTLE BIOLOGY

(Originally funded by a grant from the National Science Foundation)

Compost Column



Materials:

- Three 2-liter plastic bottles
- One 1.5" square piece of meshed plastic (from potato sack, grapefruit sack, etc)
- Tools to work with: scissors, craft knife, pen, small punch
- Tape to use for stability (optional)

Process:

- Remove labels from bottles
- Designate each bottle A, or B, or C. Mark each bottle accordingly
- Cut the top off bottle A approximately 3 inches below the neck.
- Mark the portion of the bottle above the cut #1 and the portion below the cut #2
- Cut bottle B in two locations -- above the shoulder at the top and just above the base at the bottom so that the cylinder has two tapered ends
- Mark bottle B #3. You will not use the top or bottom pieces
- Cut bottle C 2.5 to 3" above the base. Mark #4. You will not use the bottom piece

Assemble:

- Remove the lid from column piece #4. Discard the lid and use the disc from the opening to attach the meshed plastic piece over the mouth of the bottle
- Invert column #4 into the base piece which is #2
- Stack column #3 onto column #4 and tape around the middle for stability
- Poke small air holes in columns #3 and #4
- Place top piece #1 on the top of column #3 leaving the top on.

The top of the column is removable to control product and humidity. Fill the column with leaves, sticks, vegetables, and fruit kitchen waste. Add approximately 1 to 2 cups of organic soil, spreading as you put in other ingredients. Add rain water to make moist but not wet. (Water will drain through the bottom of the center column. You can test this water for pH or use on your plants.) After verifying that the air holes are adequate for an aerobic environment, place column in a dark place -- or wherever you chose -- for a couple of months and let nature turn your materials into finished compost.