



Compost Stew: An A to Z Recipe for the Earth

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Compost Stew is a charming story with collage style illustrations that introduces students to returning organic material to the soil through composting.

READ

Before: Introduce the book and tell the children a little bit about it. Follow with a comment or question that is related to the story such as, *what do you think this story is about?* Encourage a discussion so the children can comment, ask questions, and express their feelings. Set the stage for listening by asking an “I wonder” statement based on the cover illustration.

I wonder what the kind of stew that girl is making?

During: Encourage the children to comment on the illustrations, ask questions and predict what will happen next in the story. Children gain confidence and a sense of achievement through being able to correctly predict how a story will end. Point out “rare words” (e.g., those words that are not commonly used in every day conversation) and help the children relate the meaning in a way that makes sense to them.

Rare Words

- compost – a decayed mixture of plants that is used to improve the soil in a garden
- environmental – relating to the natural world and the impact of human activity on its condition
- pulp – a soft mass of vegetable matter
- mulch – a protective covering on the ground
- vegetable trimmings – leftover vegetable scraps
- rot – to slowly decay

After: Discuss the story. Ask questions...

- What do you think an environmental chef does?
- What are some of the ingredients used in making a compost stew?
- What would you include in a compost stew?
- What do the items you would include in the compost stew have in common?
- Can you think of things you would not include in a compost stew?
- Why would you not want to include those items?
- What part do worms play in creating compost stew?
- Moistening, tossing lightly and covering are the final steps. What do you think happens after you cover the brew?



DO

Soda Bottle Compost

Materials:

Empty 2 liter soda bottle

Soil

A worm or two, if available

Shredded newspaper, old vegetables & fruit, grass clippings, leaves, used coffee grounds, egg shells. Anything getting old and mushy in the fridge would work!

1. Rinse well and remove the label from the 2 liter soda bottle, so you can see inside the bottle.
2. Have an adult cut off the top of the 2 liter soda bottle.
3. Layer all kinds of plant materials and shredded paper in the bottle to nearly the top.
4. When you bottle has been filled with matter, add water so it can begin composting. Don't drown it! You don't want it to sit with water in the bottom, but it should be nice and damp.
5. Place your bottle outside in the sunshine uncovered. Be sure to secure so it can't be knocked over.
6. Over the next couple of weeks take a look inside your bottle and record the changes. What do you notice?
7. Use your freshly made compost stew to enhance a garden or flower pot and watch your plants flourish from the addition of the rich nutrients to the soil.

