



# little bugs club



## Regrowth in the Gardens

### The process of decomposition

The process of decomposition is an important function that makes regrowth in the gardens possible.

Decomposition occurs when dead organic material is broken down into nutrients that are more easily used by plants. Decomposition is that link that allows the "circle of life" to continue. It connects the end of one life to the beginning of another.



### Detritus

Detritus is another word for dead, or decaying, material. This includes fallen leaves, dead plants and animals, and other organic material. These items are broken down over time by fungi, bacteria, and animals. As detritus is broken down, nutrients are released that can be used by plants to grow.



### Mushroom vs Fungi

So what is the difference between a mushroom and a fungus? Fungi is a group classification of many different organisms including mushrooms, yeast, molds, and puffballs. Fungi can be single-celled organisms like yeast, or multi-celled like mushrooms. So, all mushrooms are fungi, but not all fungi are mushrooms.



### Animal Decomposers

Animals can also help plants decompose. Animals that eat decaying organic material are known as detritivores. One of the most well-known detritivores is the earthworm. Earthworms eat decaying material in the soil, help maintain soil structure through the tunnels they create, and increase water drainage throughout the soil.



### Reuse in the Forest

Just because a tree has died, doesn't mean that it has stopped being an important part of the forest. Many standing dead trees, or snags, provide food and shelter for a variety of species. Woodpeckers will hammer out nests in dead trees that they will use as a safe place to raise their young. Once they are done with the space, other animals like owls, squirrels, and raccoons can reuse it for their nest.

View upcoming events!

<https://rockledgegardens.com/little-bugs-club/>

Take a look below for a fun DIY composting project!



# DIY Composting

## Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

One way to reduce trash and the impact you have on the environment is to compost! Composting is a great way to turn food scraps into nutrient-rich soil that you can use in your garden. Items that can be composted include: leftover fruits and vegetables, eggshells, and coffee grounds. Don't add cooked food, dairy, or meat products to your compost as this can attract pests.

For further instructions, visit:  
<https://www.pbs.org/parents/crafts-and-experiments/make-a-composter>

### Materials Needed:

- empty 2 liter bottle
- scissors
- pin or sharp knife
- shredded newspaper
- dirt (from outside)
- dead leaves
- flat dish to hold composter
- spray bottle with water
- small towel
- compostable items (grass clippings, food scraps)

### Instructions:

- Rinse your bottle and remove any labels
- Have an adult cut off the top of the bottle, about an inch or 2 below the neck of the bottle
- Using the pin/knife, have an adult poke 8-10 small air holes on the bottom and lower sides of the bottle
- Place your bottle on the tray and add in the shredded newspaper, dirt, and leaves. This is you compost starter
- Spray this mixture with water until it is damp
- Now you can add your compost!
- Place the bottle top upside down on top of your container to act as a funnel for water
- Place your container in a sunny spot and spray with water every day; cover with a towel when you're not working with it
- Mix up the contents of your container every few days and soon you will have healthy compost to add to your garden!

