

Decomposition Bottles

adapted from an activity in *Bottle Biology*

by Mrill Ingram, Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1993

Supplies

2-Liter soda bottles with lids (2 per student)

scissors

Sharpie or other permanent marker

knife

Masking tape or packing tape

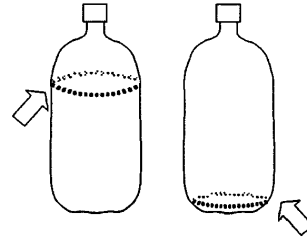


Figure 1

Before the project

1) Draw lines on 2-Liter soda bottles as shown (Figure 1). Half of the bottles should have a line around the top (below the “shoulder”) and half should have a line on the bottom (below the “hip”).

2) Use an X-acto knife or other knife to make a small slit on the line, so students can get their scissors in to cut the bottles.

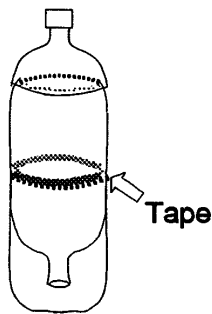


Figure 2

Making the columns

1) Students should take one of each bottle, and cut on the line.

2) Take the lid off of the bottle that was cut on the bottom. Turn this bottle upside-down and place it in the lower part of the other bottle (Figure 2). Tape.

3) Find a bunch of cool stuff to put in your decomposition bottle. Add a little soil from the earth (not from a store) to help get things started (earth soil contains decomposers!)

4) The top piece that you have left will be the lid.

5) Add leftovers from your lunch (apple cores, banana or orange peels, etc.). Do not add meat (stinky!). Add many different things that you think may break down. Do they all break down at the same rate? Do you see any decomposers moving in your column? Have fun!