

Garden Ecology: Soil and Organic Matter Experiment

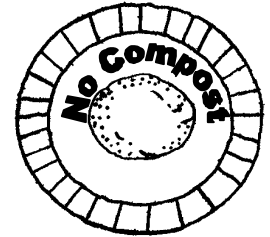
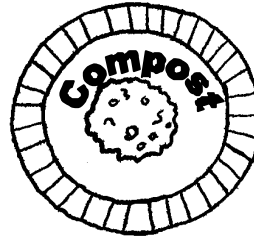
You need: 1 1/2 cups of soil that has a lot of clay in it. It will be sticky when wet.

1/4 cup compost

2 paper plates

water

mixing bowl or bucket



- **Write** COMPOST on one plate and NO COMPOST on the other.
- **Measure** 1 cup of soil. **Place** the soil in your mixing bowl. **Add** enough water to the soil to **make** a mud cake (a soil low in clay will not hold together well, so you may have to try some different soil). **Put** the mud cake on the plate marked NO COMPOST.
- In your mixing bowl, **mix** the other 1/2 cup of soil with the 1/4 cup of compost. **Add** water to the mixture to make another mud cake. **Put** this cake on the plate marked COMPOST.
- **Put** both plates in the sun to dry. When the cakes are completely dry, **break** them with your fingers.
- Which cake was more crumbly? _____
 Why do you think this is so? _____
 Which soil do you think plants would grow best in? _____
 Why? _____

You may look up information about soil in reference books or on the web to help you answer these questions.