

Save our Planet Earth... ...from garbage!

INTRODUCTION

Would you like to try an interesting experiment with garbage?

1. Get a bag made of net and put all sorts of garbage into it, such as vegetable scraps, fish bones, a tissue, a candy wrapper, cracker box, an empty can and wrapping paper. Make a list of what you put inside. You can even take some photos as a record.
2. Next, dig a hole in your backyard and bury the bag full of garbage in the hole. You can also cover the hole with a few heavy stones so that your dog or cat won't break it.
3. After about a week or two, dig up the bag to see what has happened to the garbage. In this experiment, you can find out which garbage items turn into dirt and which ones don't.

GARBAGE ITEMS MADE FROM PETROLEUM DON'T TURN INTO DIRT.

Look carefully to learn if, for example, **plastic bottles**, **plastic containers**, **cling wrap** or **foil** can be put in the category of "garbage that can turn into dirt." What do you think? If you said "No," then you are correct.

Old sandals, **broken down computers** and **erasers** are in fact originally made from **petroleum**, a **resource** found deep below the earth by drilling what are called "**oil wells**." These **garbage items** made from petroleum won't turn into dirt even after thousands of years. This is because they are made from resources that weren't originally found on the earth and so they aren't part of the cycle of living things in the earth's natural recycling system.

What do you think will happen if we continue to dig out more and more petroleum to make plastic bags, bottles and other products only to be thrown away after being used only once? Probably, our earth will become **filled up** with the garbage that we carelessly **toss out** each day! Can this problem be solved if we just continue to put our garbage into **trash cans**?

What happens to those plastic containers, plastic bags and bottles we throw away?

They are taken by **garbage trucks** either to be burned in **incinerators** (a giant furnace) or to be buried in **landfills** (a large, outdoor area for **waste disposal**).

Unless proper methods are used, **toxic** (harmful) **chemicals** called **dioxins** can be released into the air that we breathe when garbage is burned. This has become a serious problem in recent years.

What's wrong with burying the garbage?

Well, **burying** the garbage has limitations. What happens then? No matter how big the world is, we can't continue to bury garbage that doesn't turn into dirt.

Imagine that in the distant future, creatures from outer space come and see the earth, and say disappointedly, "We had heard the earth was a beautiful blue planet. But actually, it's just an ugly Garbage Planet." You wouldn't want them to say that about our earth, would you?

GARBAGE THAT RETURNS TO THE EARTH.

"What kind of garbage?"

We humans create a huge amount of garbage in our daily activities. "What kind of garbage?" you might ask. Garbage can be sorted and collected in the categories of

"Burnable," "Unburnable," "Large-sized (Bulk) Garbage" and "Recyclable Garbage." But let's take a look at all the things we toss out from a different angle.

How about a category called "Natural Garbage"?

In other words, the type of garbage that turns into dirt after being left in the soil for some time, where it is decomposed, or broken down into fine earth by bacteria and other organisms. Among the kinds of trash we toss out each day, what kind of items could go into this category? You guessed it! With help from **worms** and **bacteria**, **kitchen litter**, such as **fish bones**, **vegetable scraps** and **leftover food** are items that will "return to the earth" after some time.

Do you know what a compost bin is?

A **compost bin** is a **container** in which you can put leaves, **weeds** and **kitchen litter** and add worms and bacteria to **decompose** them. In a compost bin, your **vegetable scraps** and **leftovers** turn into **fertilizer**, or in other words, a **rich soil** that helps plants grow!

If you have a flower bed or vegetable garden, you can easily try this form of recycling--turning garbage into nutrients--by yourself. Very conveniently, by **composting**, you can get rid of kitchen litter and make your own fertilizer for free.

In America, **worm composting** has recently become popular -through the mail, you can order a **jar of earthworms**. And since America is such a huge country, a lot of these jars are delivered by air. Earthworms flying all over the country! What a funny thought!

How to reduce kitchen litter.

Some of you might not even have space outside your home for a compost bin. Or for that matter, a vegetable garden on which to use fertilizer.

But even still, you can do a lot of things to reduce **kitchen litter**. For starters, you should make an effort not to buy more than you need. Next, try to make the most of your food in your cooking. Also, to reduce the amount of daily kitchen litter, you should drain as much water as possible from your food scraps before tossing them into the garbage. Finally, be sure to eat up everything on your plate!