

Teaching Kids About Waste!

1. Make a composter. Explain what compost is, how it's made and why it matters. Decomposition of once-living things is how nature recycles nutrients. This is why old bits of plants (apple cores, tea bags, paper, banana peels) can turn into humus, the organic part of soil, and soil can in turn support the growth of new plant life. Some of the key players involved in this are the creepy, crawly decomposers: carpenters, ants, worms, beetles, slugs. Without them, dead stuff would build up forever and never get recycled. But thankfully decomposers live off dead things: it's their main source of food! Then they poop out soil, and plants start growing all over again.
 - a. I did a workshop on composting for kids last month if that would be useful: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RuMT-W1GZbU>
 - b. The first half of the video is about soil and compost (the second half is about planting seeds so you can skip that part)
2. Make paper. This uses old paper to make new paper. It's a bit involved but allows kids to recycle right in their own homes! <https://babbledabble.com/science-art-design-for-kids-how-to-make-paper/>
3. Upcycling. The second "R" - reuse! It's better for the planet to reduce first, reuse second and recycle if you can't do the other two! Here in NL we can't recycle many of our glass containers, but they can be great for making crafts!
 - a. Oddly-shaped bottles like balsamic vinegar: <http://populardiideas.blogspot.com/2014/01/beautiful-wrapped-bottles-diy.html>
 - b. Any sort of jar like salsa or babyfood: <https://happyhooligans.ca/stained-glass-with-sharpie-markers-and-a-jar/>
4. Waste scavenger hunt. Send kids on a search of their homes for common recyclable items (laundry detergent containers). Once everyone has found as many of the items on the list as they can, show them what those items can be turned into. Resources such as: <https://www.maine.gov/dep/waste/recycle/whatrecyclablesbecome.html>