



COMPOSTING



Composting is the process of recycling organic material into fertilizer that can be used for soil for plants. This process relies on microbes to complete the decomposition of the material. There are three main components of composting: browns, greens, and water. Browns are plant material that contain carbon which is the food source for the microbes that decompose the material. Greens are fresh organic material that contain high amounts of nitrogen which allows the decomposers to grow and reproduce rapidly. Water is also necessary for the survival of the decomposers as it provides moisture that helps break down the organic material. Fruits and vegetables, coffee grounds, shredded newspaper, and grass clippings are some materials that can be composted. Benefits of composting include reducing the need for chemical fertilizers, enriching the soil, and reducing methane emissions from landfills.

This is a page from *Bacteria and Me*, a microbiology coloring book by Aedan Gardill and Tiffany Harris, and is funded by the Marie Christine Kohler fellowship.

To learn more information about the project and access free downloads of the coloring book pages, visit:

kohlerfellows.illuminatingdiscovery.wisc.edu/projects/bacteria-and-me/

