

Bury it and dig it up



ZERO WASTE
ACTIVITY



What can we
observe?

This intriguing way to explore waste in your Enviroschool involves burying pieces of everyday waste. Decomposition is the breakdown of natural materials by the action of insects, worms, fungi and bacteria. Decomposition is a natural biological process which replenishes the Earth, Papatūānuku. By monitoring changes over time, you will discover which things are biodegradable and which aren't. This will help you think about the effects of landfilling, and how long different types of waste will persist in our environment.

You will need

- An area within your grounds for burying waste
- Bury it record sheet
- Scales



Method

1. Using gloves, collect different pieces of waste from a class bin, or from the Carry It With You bags. Find a piece of glass, metal, plastic, paper, food, packaging, and different kinds of clothing, e.g. cotton and nylon.
2. As individuals, or in small groups, take a piece of waste, weigh it and record observations on the 'Bury it record sheet'.
3. Bury the waste in soil outside, close to where you can monitor changes. Take photos!
4. Use iceblock sticks to mark where each piece of waste is buried.
5. Draw up a class chart to record the name of each piece of waste buried and individual predictions about:
 - which pieces are biodegradable and non-biodegradable
 - how long each piece will take to break down.
6. Over four weeks, water the soil to keep the area damp.
7. Dig up your waste each week and record the results.
 - Look for changes in shape, colour, texture, weight and smell.
 - Look around the waste and identify which organisms are helping to decompose the waste. A magnifying glass is great to use here.
8. Write or draw any changes you observe on your Bury it record sheet. Cover up your pieces again when you've finished.
9. Discuss and collate your findings to add to your **Pool of Knowledge**.

Reflection/ Pūmahara

What was the result of burying different pieces of waste?

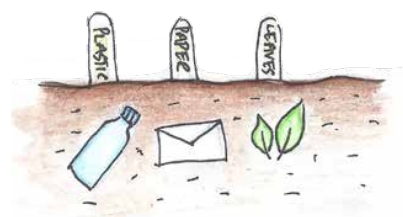
What do you think is needed to help break down waste?

How has the waste affected the surrounding land?

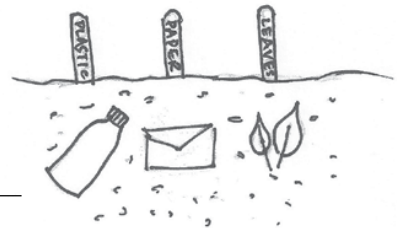
What makes good kai for Papatūānuku? What would cause her indigestion?

How many generations will it take for some of your waste items to break down?

What would happen to un-biodegradable waste that reached Tangaroa and Hinemoana? What could this mean for the creatures of the ocean?



Bury it record sheet



My piece of waste is: _____

It weighed: _____

I think that in four weeks time it will _____

Use this table to keep a close eye on any changes with your piece of waste as you dig it up over the next four weeks. Draw or write about the changes you notice.

	I noticed...	This tells me that...	Drawing
Week One			
Week Two			
Week Three			
Week Four			