

## The Microbiology of Composting

Have you ever left fruit or vegetables out on the counter for too long? Maybe you noticed some fuzzy mold growing, or that produce turning different colors?

Sometimes, people will gather food and leaves into a pile and let it sit over time, trying to improve the fertility of their soil.

You may wonder, how does food waste and old leaves turn into something useful for our environment?

This happens because invisible **microorganisms** like bacteria and fungi will use this compost as food and produce things that are helpful to our environment.

**Your summer assignment is to observe how microorganisms compost your favorite fruit or vegetable. This assignment is optional, and will not go in the gradebook.**

Directions:

1. Read more about composting and the microorganisms involved in composting [CORNELL Composting - Compost Microorganisms](#)
2. Place your favorite fruit or vegetable in a cardboard box and place it outside, preferably somewhere that birds, or rodents will not be able to get to it.
3. Make an initial observation (color, size, smell, etc) and then add to the first journal about what your fruit or vegetable looks like below.
4. At the beginning of each week, make an observation and a journal entry based on what your fruit or vegetable looks like.
5. Bring the journals to class on the first day of school!

Have fun exploring the amazing world of microbiology.

**Initial observation:**

**Week 1 observation:**

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**Week 2 observation:**

**Week 3 observation:**

**Week 4 observation:**

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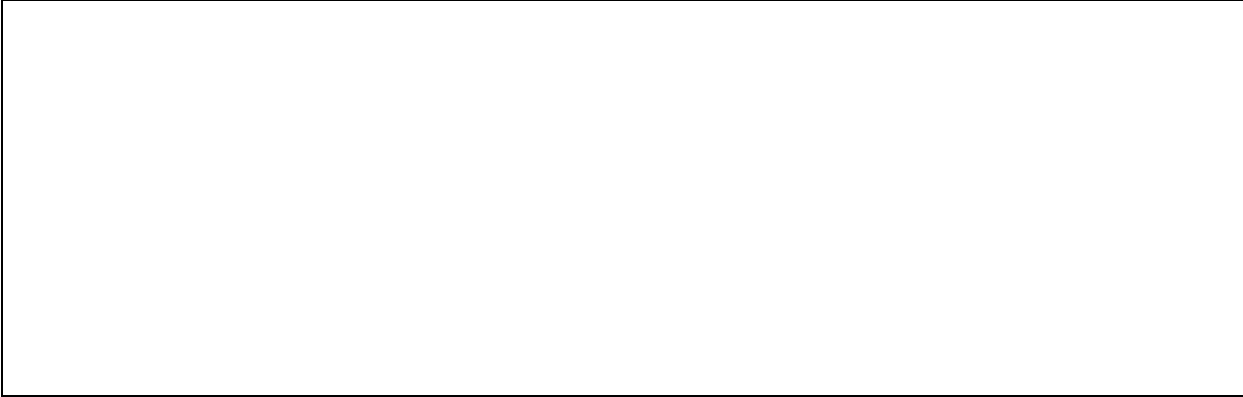
**Week 5 observation:**

**Week 6 observation:**

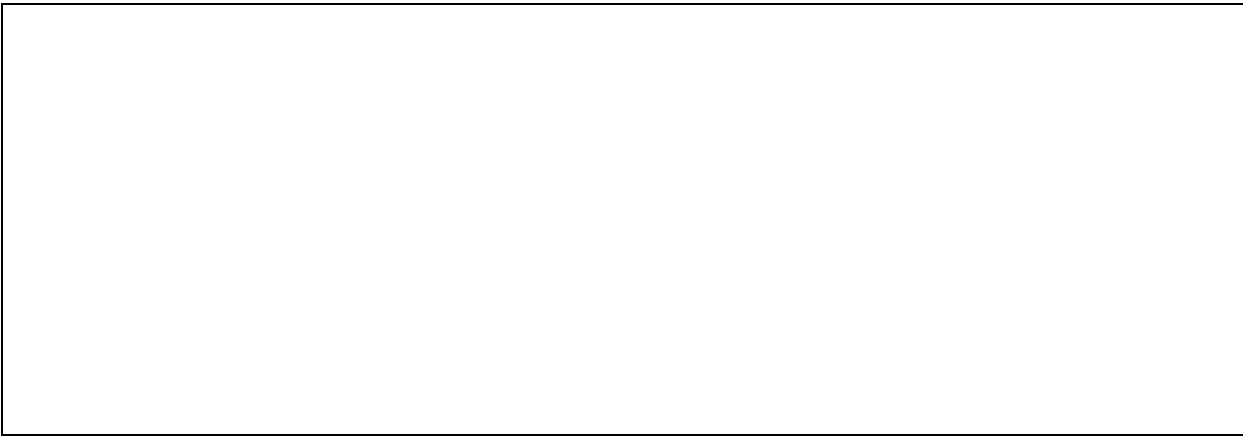
**Week 7 observation:**

**Week 8 observation:**

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**Week 9 observation:**



**Week 10 observation:**

