

# Seedling Experiment

## How does compost help growing plants?

Compost is a great source of nutrients, supporting soil invertebrates (like worms), and assisting in maintaining soil moisture.

In this experiment students will see how seeds planted in compost grow compared to those planted in poor quality soil.

### Experiment:

**Aim:** To compare the growth rates of seeds planted in compost versus those in poor quality soil.

**Time:** Two to three weeks.

### Each student will need:

1. Three wide mouth glass jars
2. Bean seeds (try "Purple King" beans, they are strong growers)
3. Composted soil.
4. Poor quality soil from a lawn, pathway etc.
5. Spray bottle with water.

### Method:

1. Soak 12 beans overnight in water and drain off water the following morning.
2. Fill one jar with poor quality soil.
3. Fill a second jar with a 50:50 mixture of compost and poor quality soil.
4. Fill the third jar with compost.
5. Using the spray bottle, moisten the soil in all three jars.
6. Plant two/three bean seeds in each jar.
7. Place the jars in a sunny, warm position.
8. Keep the jars watered and each day monitor the growth of each plant (shoots should appear in a week).

**TIP:** Soils that contain lots of decomposed organic matter, like compost, can store more food for the plants and release it to them as they need it.

The beans in the organic material should shoot quicker and look healthier than those in the inorganic soil.

For any further information please contact Council's  
Waste Education Officer on **02 4974 2848**.

