

Fall 1993

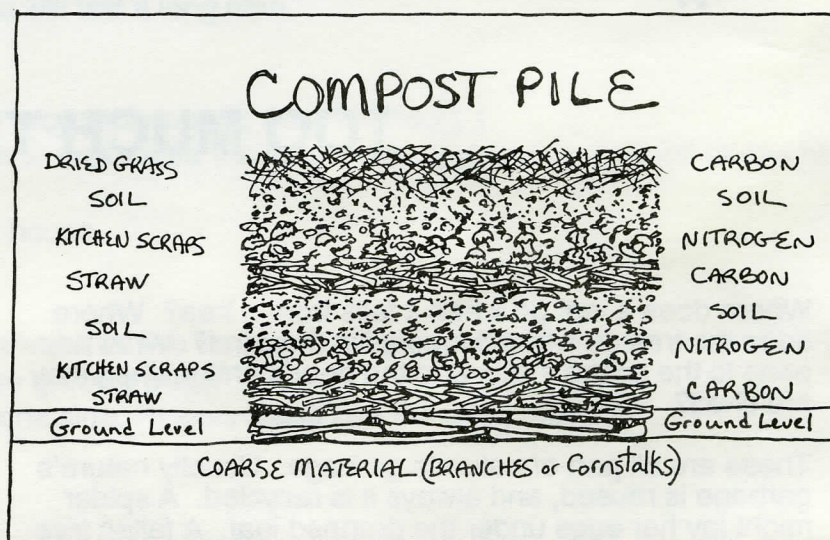


## MAKIN' DIRT

How does nature recycle its garbage? It decomposes it. Nature's dead or discarded plant and animal material is eaten by worms and bugs and billions of micro-organisms (bacteria and fungi). This process breaks the garbage into smaller, simpler molecules that become nutrients in soil. This is nature's nutrient cycle. You can imitate it and recycle your kitchen and garden waste and build soil at the same time.

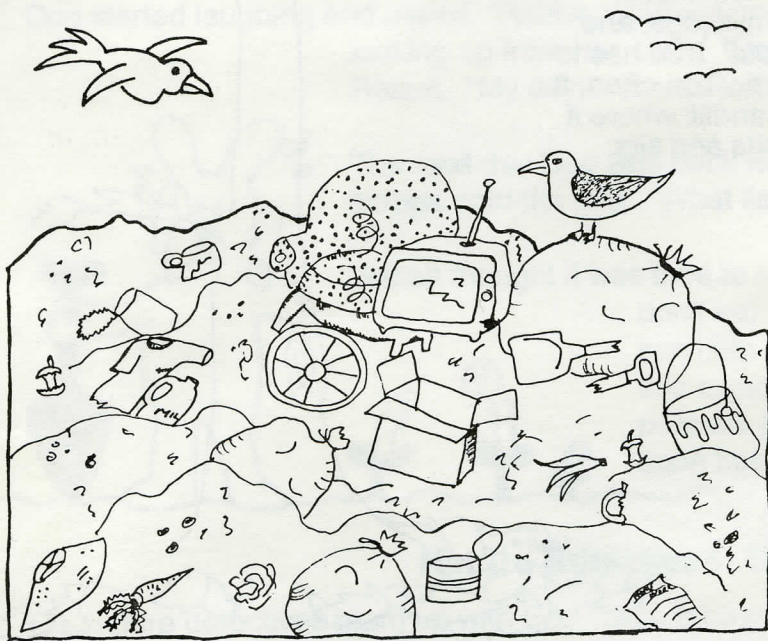
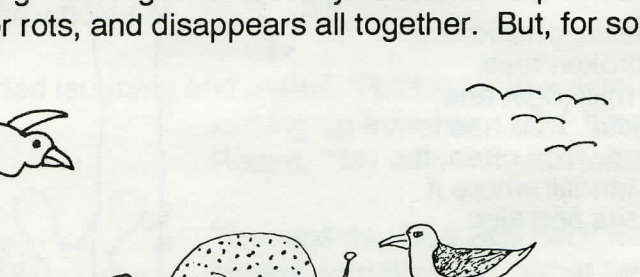
Twenty five to thirty percent of the garbage that goes to the landfill comes from our kitchen - left-overs we throw away. We can change that by building a pile of garden and kitchen wastes in our yard. Nature's recyclers will move in and create composted soil for us to use in our gardens and on our lawns.

Construct a space about three feet by three feet and pile alternate four inch layers of carbon materials, nitrogen materials, and soil making sure enough air and water can get to it.



## TO THE DUMP

Open it up and throw it in! What happens to that piece of trash after you toss it into the garbage can? Is it gone for good? No way! It takes a trip to the dump or landfill where we hope it biodegrades, or rots, and disappears all together. But, for something to biodegrade, time, air, sunlight, and nature's clean up crew are needed. Because trash is heaped and buried in landfills, air and sunlight can't reach it. So, the garbage isn't able to break down and is actually preserved in many cases. If you dig down into a pile of garbage you might find an apple core that your grandma threw away when she was a little girl - looking just the same as the day she tossed it out! Yikes!! If garbage doesn't disappear at the dump, what happens to it? The mountains of trash just keep getting bigger, and bigger, and BIGGER! Soon there won't be room left at the dumps to take our garbage. Before this happens, there are three things we can do to help keep the dumps from overflowing - **RECYCLE, REDUCE, and REUSE.**





## THE THREE R'S

The key to the three r's, reduce, reuse, and recycle, is to think about what you buy before you buy it.

## REDUCE

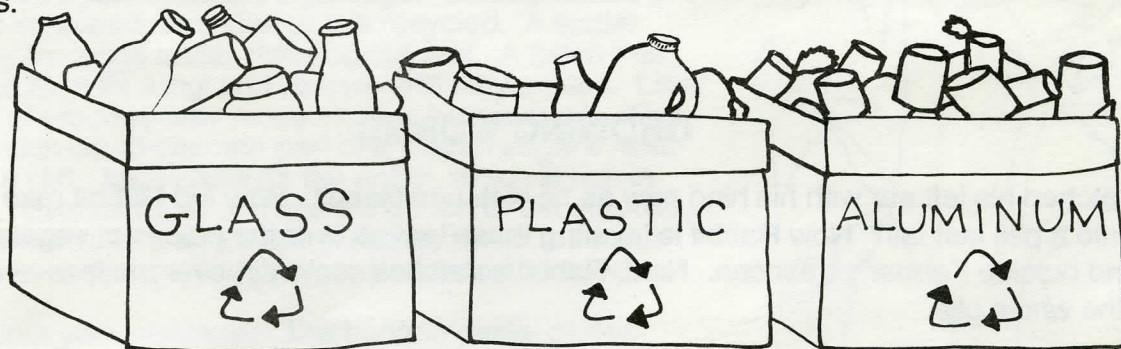
Is the item you're about to buy wrapped in unnecessary layers? Most of our garbage is packing material - layers of plastic or cardboard. By reducing the amount of packaging we buy, we reduce the amount that ends up at the dump. Choose the item that comes in the least amount of wrapping or that comes in a recycled container.

## REUSE

Use and reuse the things you have at home before buying anything new. If you give your old toys and clothes to someone that needs them, they'll get more use before ending up in a mountain of trash. By buying less, we end up throwing away less.

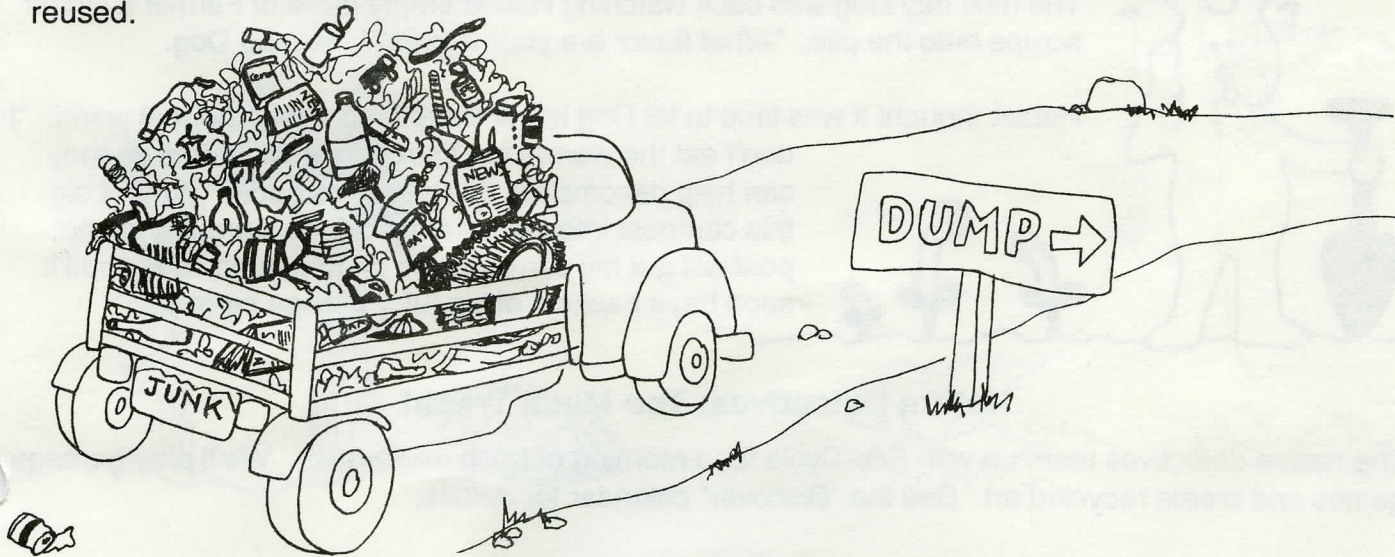
## RECYCLE

Every time new things are made, energy and natural resources are used up. But, old paper can be recycled to make more paper without cutting down as many trees. Cans can be recycled to make more cans so less metal needs to be taken from the earth. Whenever you can, choose a product that is made from recycled materials or that can be recycled. This symbol helps you to identify these items.



## HELP!

Without your help this truckload of garbage could end up at the dump. Using the three R's, see what you can do to make the pile smaller. Find and color the things that could be recycled, reduced, or reused.





## YOU CAN DO IT!

Go down the list and check off ways that you can help reduce the amount of garbage that ends up at the landfill.

### Reduce

- \*I'll avoid fast food because most of it is overpackaged.
- \*I'll buy things that have the least amount of packaging.
- \*I'll choose sturdy toys and clothes that will last a long time.

### Recycle

- \*I'll save bottles, cans, paper, and any recyclable plastic (look for the ♻️).
- \*I'll look at packages before I buy them to make sure they are made of recycled material or can be recycled.
- \*I'll help make a composting bin at my house.

### Reuse

- \*Instead of throwing away toys and clothes that I've outgrown, I'll give them to someone else to use.
- \*I'll help my parents remember to reuse grocery bags.
- \*When I use a piece of paper on only one side, I'll save it and use the other side too.

## GROWING WORMS

Dog scratched his left ear with his hind paw as he watched Rabbit. Why did Rabbit rake all those leaves into a pile last fall? Now Rabbit is layering those leaves over the pieces of vegetable waste she found outside Farmer's trashcan. Next, Rabbit scratches some dirt over the leaves and then waters the whole pile.

Dog started laughing and asked, "Rabbit, what are you growing?". "Worms," replied Rabbit without looking up from her work. "Dog thinks his dinner is grown in bags", thought Rabbit. "My dinner needs to be carefully planned for a year."



The next day Dog was back watching Rabbit empty more of Farmer's dinner scraps onto the pile. "What flavor are your worms?", teased Dog.

Rabbit thought it was time to let Dog know something about the real world. "I don't eat the worms but I need to grow worms so they can help decompose this pile of compost. When I dig this compost into my garden soil, the worms and compost will get my carrot seeds off to a good start and I'll soon have baskets of big juicy orange carrots."

## Nature Detectives: Too Much Trash!

The nature detectives team up with Eco-Cycle for a morning of trash exploration. We'll play garbage games and create recycled art. See the "Discover" calendar for details.