

THE ENVIRONMENT



1. Using the tune of “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star,” **write and sing a song about recycling.**

2. Math can be fun! **Prove it by solving these number puzzles:**

- The average American produces 4.6 pounds of waste per day. If the average life expectancy is 78 years, how much waste does the average American produce in a lifetime?
(Answer: 130,962 pounds, if you don't count leap years.)
- If 120,000 aluminum cans are recycled every minute, how many are recycled in a week?
(Answer: 1,209,600,000.)
- The world's human population is approximately 6.7 billion. If we use 1 trillion plastic bags annually, how many is each person using in a year, on average? Do you think that the average American uses more than the average or less?
(Answer: 149; Americans use about 295 per person per year.)

3. **Set aside an area of your garden** where you can experiment with decomposition times. Bury items that you'd like to compare, such as paper, orange peels, a piece of a milk carton, or a plastic bag. Bury the items in the garden about 4 inches deep. Use craft sticks to mark what you buried where. Every 2 weeks, dig up the item to see whether it has decomposed. Write a science project report about your findings.



4. Resolve to **make something useful out of every piece of your trash** that you possibly can. These ideas may help you to get started:

- ➔ **Make holiday decorations out of Styrofoam cups and meat trays. (Be sure to wash them.)**
- ➔ **Make jewelry out of pull-tabs or bottle caps.**
- ➔ **Make a burglar alarm out of a string of aluminum cans.**
- ➔ **Plant seeds in margarine or yogurt tubs.**
- ➔ **Use plastic lids as Frisbees or under plants.**
- ➔ **Use old sheets and towels as rags for cleaning the car or your bicycle.**
- ➔ **Make a skirt or tote bag out of an old pair of jeans.**
- ➔ **Cut strips from old newspapers or magazines and weave them to make placemats.**
- ➔ **Laminate postcards to use as coasters.**
- ➔ **Clip supermarket “cents off” coupons and organize them by category in used envelopes.**

5. **Prove to yourself that waste is a good source of energy.** Put a thermometer inside a compost pile. How much warmer than the air is the decomposing vegetable matter?

6. Read more about switchgrass as a source of biofuels at Oak Ridge National Laboratory's Web page, "Biofuels from Switchgrass: Greener Energy Pastures," at <http://bioenergy.ornl.gov/papers/misc/switgrs.html>.

7. Learn more about biofuels. Read *Biofuels* by Karen D. Povey (Kidhaven Press, 2006). Try also *Biomass: Fueling Change* by Niki Walker (Crabtree Publishing Company, 2007). Imagine and write a description of a self-sustaining town run entirely on biofuels.

IN THE GARDEN

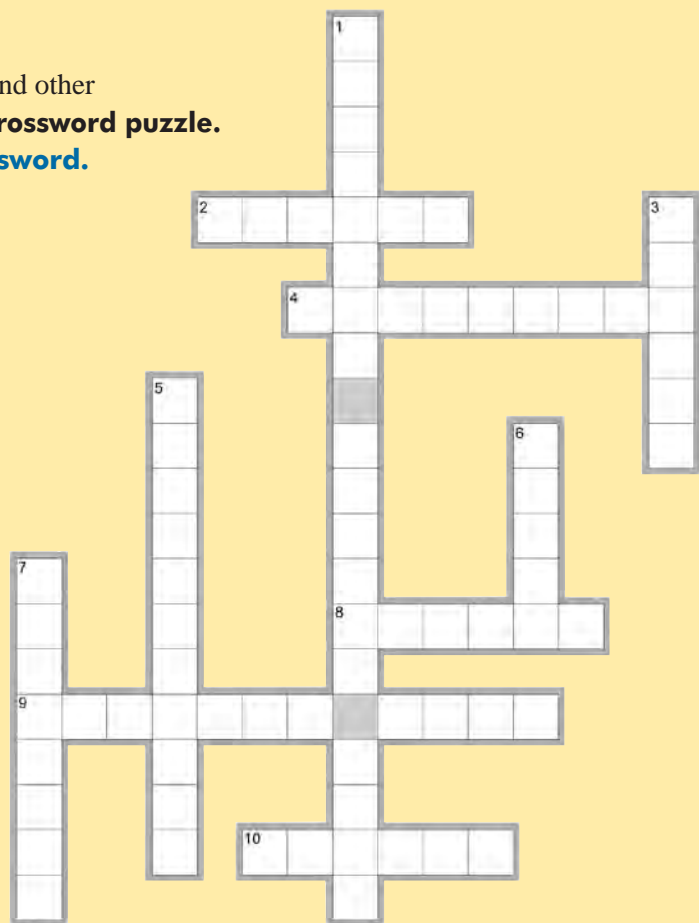
1. See how much you know about skunk cabbage and other stinky plants on pages 82–85 by **completing our crossword puzzle**. Check your answers at Almanac4kids.com/crossword.

Across

2. A bird that loves skunk cabbage
4. A country where corpse flowers grow
8. A special tall, curved leaf of the eastern skunk cabbage flower
9. What corpse flowers smell like (two words with a space in between)
10. The color of the spathe in a western skunk cabbage

Down

1. The world's largest single flower (three words with spaces in between)
3. An egg-shape spike inside a spathe
5. The kind of roots that skunk cabbage has
6. An area where skunk cabbage might grow
7. A month when skunk cabbage flowers



-EclipseCrossword.com



2. You can grow a Venus flytrap, a plant that attracts insects and then eats them! For best results, plant your flytrap in a partially sealed terrarium or glass jar to provide high humidity. Use a soil mixture that contains sphagnum moss and sand. Don't add fertilizer.