

# Waikato

# ENVIROSCHOOLS



## Leaf Litter Hunt for Nature's Cycles

### How does Papatuanuku deal with Nature's waste?

In this activity you are going to be a 'waste detective'. Your mission is to find out how Papatūānuku and Tānemahuta deal with nature's waste? And decide is it really waste?

### What you will need:

- A magnifying glass (if you have one)
- If you created a 'Compost heap of Knowledge' as part of the on-going Zero Waste inquiry - add another layer to this.



### What to do:

1. Visit a local bush area or find a grove of trees in your garden where there are lots of fallen leaves and rotting material underneath.
2. Carefully examine the surface layer of leaves.  
What do they look like? Are there any creatures living there? What does this layer feel like (hot, cool, moist, dry)?
3. Do the same in the next layer down.  
Are the leaves still intact? Can you see anything eating them? What does this layer feel like? (use a magnifying glass if you have one)
4. Scrape away another layer.  
What does the leaf material look like here? How does it feel?
5. Find one type of organic material with as many stages of decay as possible – eg: a fresh leaf through to a skeleton. Collect samples of each stage to sketch or stick to another a layer of your 'Compost Heap of Knowledge' or to share with others.
6. Return the remaining material back to the original area and leave it as undisturbed as possible.

### Reflection *(record your thoughts and ideas on your 'Compost heap of Knowledge', if you have one)*

- How does nature take care of its organic waste?
- What creatures play a role in breaking it down?
- Where was the most decomposition happening and what were the conditions like there?
- What do you think happens to the broken down organic matter? Is it really wasted?
- What do you think organic waste looks like in the realms of Rongomātāne (the vege garden)?
- How can we copy nature's cycle to manage food waste in our household?

