

Educator Tips For a Mess Free Lab

- The leafy greens used in this lab can be anything: spinach, cabbage, romaine lettuce, etc. Check with your local grocer to see what they do with their expired and wilted greens. The greens are going to ferment anyway so they don't have to be pretty.
- Set up very clear boundaries for the "wet" portion of the lab and do these activities over a tarp, sink or bowl.
- Before the lab starts, pre-portion lab materials like baking soda and vinegar in reusable containers to minimize spill risks.
- If time allows, show students what happens with the classic baking soda/vinegar reaction - and explain that gases are released rapidly. Be sure to emphasize that unless they want to be covered in lettuce, they should leave their bag/jar open during this portion of the lab to allow gases to escape. Remind them that it will save them a lot of cleaning.
- An O-ring or rubber bands can be wrapped around the spout of a funnel or jar to secure pantyhose
- Use an empty desk or lab station as "supply check out." Different student groups will need different materials, based on their experimental design. When students complete their Lab Instruction sheet, they can bring it to the check out station and get all the right ingredients for their lab.
- As this lab includes fermentation, it also includes a little bit of waiting time (jars will need to sit between 24 and 48 hours.) Make sure to have a space set aside where these jars will remain undisturbed.
- If using glass jars, have each group mark their jar with their names, date of the experiment, and the date they'll be completing their experiment. Permanent marker/pen on masking tape works well for this, and can be stuck directly on the lid of the jar
- Due to the nature of this lab, students may finish at different times. Have an activity prepared for students who finish early to complete.
- After the lab is completed and students are wrapping up, make sure the lid of each jar is only sealed loosely. The short amount of fermentation time shouldn't allow for the bacteria to release a lot of gas, but leaving the lid of the jar loose ensures that they can escape.