



Lesson Plan: Grow a Germ Zoo

Brighter Idea - Try This at Home

Grow your own culture of bacteria and fungus to see the germs lurking around us!

In this activity you will need:

Supplies

- * 1 tsp beef stock powder
- * 1 tsp gelatin
- * 1 tsp sugar
- * 1 cup of water
- * Pot
- * Spoon
- * Heat source
(hot plate or stovetop)
- * Petri dish
- * Cotton swab
- * Tape

Instructions

- 1 Bring the water to a boil. Stir in the beef stock powder, sugar and gelatin until completely dissolved, which takes about 1 minute.
- 2 Turn off the heat and let the mixture cool for about 10 minutes.
- 3 Take the lids off your petri dishes and carefully pour the mixture into the dishes.
- 4 Put the lids on your dishes and place them in a refrigerator to cool for 4 hours.
- 5 Once the gelatin is set, remove it from the refrigerator. Rub your cotton swab on a place that gets touched a lot, then open your petri dish and rub the cotton swab on the gelatin in a zig-zag pattern.
- 6 Put the lid on the petri dish and tape it closed. Turn the petri dish upside down and put it in a warm place for three to five days.
- 7 After a few days, check on your dish and see what you've grown!
- 8 When you're done with your petri dishes, keep them sealed and throw them away.

What's this all about?

Microbes are all around us on almost every surface we touch, but they are difficult to see without a microscope. By growing a culture of microbes in a petri dish, you can see what's on all those surfaces.

