

D-^{Lab} Corncob Charcoal



Preparing the Kiln



A 55-gallon oil drum can be used as a kiln to make charcoal. In order to increase the airflow through the drum, cut several small holes in the bottom. In the other end, cut a large square opening for filling the kiln with cobs. You will also need a piece of sheet metal for a lid to cover the hole on the top. When starting the burn, the drum should be placed on top of three stones, so that air can flow in through the holes in the bottom.

Filling the Drum



Place a thin layer (about 5 cm) of corn husks in the bottom of the oil drum with a big stick in the center of the drum. Add a much thicker layer (about 25 cm) of corn cobs. Alternate layers until the drum is full then remove the stick to form a hole that goes to the bottom of the drum.

Lighting the Fire



Light the drum at the bottom of the hole formed by removing the stick. After about ten minutes, ignite the smoke, to make the fire burn more cleanly.

Sealing the Drum



Cover the drum with the metal lid. Wait about two minutes then carefully remove the stones from under the drum. Seal the bottom edges and the top with sand. Wait at least two hours before opening the drum

Removing the Charcoal



After two hours, brush off the sand from the top of the drum and remove the lid. The cobs inside should be carbonized and ready to burn. If they are not fully carbonized, next time, let them burn longer before covering.