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Monday, January 25, 2010

Tea Bag Rocket

Here's another I'm doing to show off my astounding talents for our Family Talent Show...

Take an unused tea bag ([wrinkles her nose] something icky like licorice) and empty it of its contents. (Just take out the staple, and unfold it.)



Open it up so that it will stand upright, as a cylinder.



Light the top of it on fire with a match or lighter.

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✿ Tea with Honey ✿

The Old Milk Can
Battle charge

living our own lives
Kyan's Chalk Art

Plot 55
photo walks

No Unsacred Places
All the Pieces and a Bit of Outside

i z a k o o
CAN'T BE SILENCED

Heart Rockin Family
Double Digits :: April 15, 2014

A Soulful Life
Impromptu end of week stream of consciousness

The Loving Path
longest. winter. ever

Mom in Madison

The Napping House
Rockets and the moon.

[Show All](#)

Magic Shoppe



Favorite Things: Books, games, science kits and tools, software, and a few art supplies.

☆ The O L M ☆

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Count down...



and then shwoosh!!!

Up it goes into the sky.

Have another one ready for back up, 'cause they'll probably wanna see it again. And again.

How it works: *"Everyone knows that hot air rises and this experiment demonstrates that idea as well as the principles of convection currents. As the tea bag burns, hot air is being created, as well as a thermal, or convection current, under the bag. When the tea bag burns down into a small enough ball of ashes, the convection current causes it shoot up in the air."*
[Quoted directly from Steve Spangler Science.]

Posted by Stephanie at 5:17 AM
Labels: [Investigating](#)

17 comments:



Jenny said...

um...so what am I doing wrong. Mine just burned. It was quite unimpressive.

8/19/2011 8:00 AM



Stephanie said...

Jenny - when I transferred this post to this OLM, I lost the comments, so they're not here.

One person used a bag that was like cloth, instead of the paper-like ones.
Only the ones that are like paper will work.

8/19/2011 8:07 AM



Stephanie said...

The paper is similar to the sort of paper that coffee filters are made out of.

8/19/2011 8:08 AM



Penny said...

Tried this today. Worked great. The kids were very surprised at the tea 'paper' rising up. Thanks for the idea!

11/02/2011 12:32 PM



Phyllis said...

I have been meaning to do this for ages!

6/06/2012 8:21 AM

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Yesterday's Joy

Yesterday's Joy

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586

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TINA Strano said...

Like this idea! Can you tell me why it takes off? Is there some sort of combustible? What's the chemical reaction??

5/04/2013 1:15 PM

Stephanie said...

Tina, the explanation is at the bottom of the post. It's convection.

5/04/2013 1:35 PM

Annie B said...

Would love to do in school with my class...how high does it go and how fast does it burn out... Don't want to set off a fire drill.

8/01/2013 5:15 AM

Penny Dumelie said...

I did it in my kitchen and set off no alarms. It rises quite high but never hit the ceiling... maybe 4 feet off the ground. It burns really fast too. As long as the students are careful, no one should get burned. I think you could easily do it in a classroom.

8/01/2013 10:09 AM

Stephanie said...

Annie and Penny - yes. Sorry, I meant to get to right away, Annie and got busy. I'd say 4-6 feet (at the most), and just a few seconds. 3-5?

8/01/2013 11:25 AM

amleber said...

This does not work!!!!

We tried 5 different bag types and there was no success!

Don't waste time or tea

4/17/2014 11:22 AM

Stephanie said...

I've done it several times, amleber, and it absolutely does work. You need the papery, fiber sort of teabags, as has been mentioned.

4/17/2014 6:30 PM

Jessica Cook said...

Would anyone mind giving the name/brand of the tea bag being used..? We used about 8 different types (Lipton - olong) and nada! Kiddos are a bit disappointed .. Ok ok, I am too! :/

4/29/2014 2:45 AM

nnanes said...

Does anyone have any idea which brand of tea bags work?

4/29/2014 4:11 PM

z15clerk said...

Maybe it would help for someone to indicate what brand of tea was used.

4/30/2014 4:07 PM

Stephanie said...

Sheesh....

Have they changed tea bags so much, then?

I used two or three different brands of tea and they had the same tea bags... nowadays I buy non-stapled and herbal teas.

Let me think about (and see at the grocer's) what I have used in the past.

4/30/2014 7:11 PM

MommaD said...

From one Science teacher to another; Let me try to help...

- 1) The problem with some tea bags is that when you open & empty them you are NOT left with a cylinder. Some tea bags are sealed on 3 sides and have a bottom. If you try to do this with a bottom, it will not work. The convection current needs the open cylinder to draw up cooler air as the warmer air is created by the flame. (I just tried 6 different tea bags that we have in the cabinet - only Bigelow and regular Lipton could be unsealed, emptied and created into a cylinder with open top & bottom.)
- 2) The convection current doesn't draw up until the cylinder is almost completely burned. Be patient and wait for it.
- 3) If you do this in an area with low ceilings (or like I did once, on the glass top stove with a venting hood) the cylinder will not take flight because it can not get the lift it needs from the air currents. Try moving to a more open space.

I hope this helps those who have been struggling!
Happy Experimenting!

5/18/2014 7:47 PM

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