



*Forest Floor Terrarium
Background Information*



Decomposition

What is it?

Decomposition is the process by which matter is broken down into nitrogen and other basic elements by bacteria, fungi, and other consumers.

How does it relate to this activity?

The forest floor, with its layer of leaf litter, is the perfect environment for holding in moisture. This moisture, along with air and the energy of the plant matter, provides an excellent place for the growth of bacteria and fungi. The bacteria and fungi soften plant matter and eventually use the energy stored inside. Over time, bacteria, fungi, and other small consumers will convert the forest's plant matter into nitrogen and other matter produced through their waste products.

Did you know?

All organic matter (plants, animals, plant and animal products, etc.) will eventually decompose. As a result, nitrogen, water, and other matter will be cycled back to the Earth.