



Forest Floor Terrarium Background Information



Physical vs. Chemical Change

What is it?

Physical Change

- The physical properties (the way it looks, smells, feels, etc.) may or may not change.
- The change may be reversible.
- A new substance *is not* produced.

Examples:

- cutting logs to make firewood
- falling leaves from a tree
- mining bauxite from the ground

Chemical Change

- The physical properties change.
- The change is not reversible.
- A new substance *is* produced.

Examples:

- burning firewood to make carbon and heat
- composting leaves into soil
- making aluminum from bauxite

How does it relate to this activity?

The leaf matter and rotting log are chemically changing as they decompose into phosphorus, nitrogen, and other matter that will become nutrients in the air, water, and soil.