



Nature Challenge

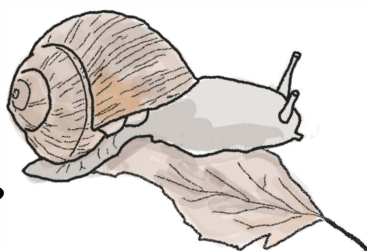
Nature's Recycling Heroes

This notebook belongs to

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Time machine

How do different creatures help wood decay?



Raccoons, squirrels, owls and woodpeckers like trees that are beginning to decay. They use the big holes as homes.

Spiders like old logs that are in the half-way stage of decaying because they are home to lots of bugs which they can capture and eat.

Earthworms, slugs and snails like trees in the final stages of decay, when the trees are changing to soil. The new forming ground is moist, loose and rich in nutrients.

Mini-challenge

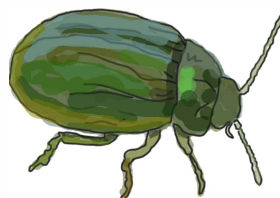
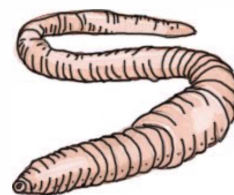
Go on a hunt for rotting logs!

Try going back regularly to watch the different minibeast recyclers over time. Also remember to roll logs back to where you found them, otherwise the minibeasts under them might end up as a bird's dinner!

Meet nature's recyclers!

Some creatures, known as **decomposers**, turn dead plants and animals back into food and energy for new plants and animals.

Likewise, humans can also turn rubbish back into reusable materials!



Lichens, mushrooms, sow bugs, earthworms and beetles spend their whole lives recycling for nature.



Mini-challenge

Go on a hunt to find some decomposers. How many different ones can you find and can you identify them all?

If you have a smart phone download the iNaturalist app at www.inaturalist.org to help you find out about the different creatures you might see.

Become a composter!

You can help reduce the amount of food waste by using your old vegetable peelings to create a kind of plant food called compost. Have a go at making your own mini-bottle composter.

1. Cut around the neck of a plastic bottle to make a wider neck hole (ask a grown up to help you do this).
2. Add a layer of garden soil to the bottom of the bottle around 2cm-4cm deep.
3. Add a layer of peelings from leftover fruits and veggies. Repeat this layering pattern until your bottle is full.
4. Finally add another layer of soil and a layer of grass clippings or leaves at the top.
5. Dampen the materials in your bottle with a little bit of water. Tape the top of the bottle to keep the moisture in.
6. Let the magic begin! Check your bottle once a week to see how things are changing. When ready, use the compost on your house plants!

