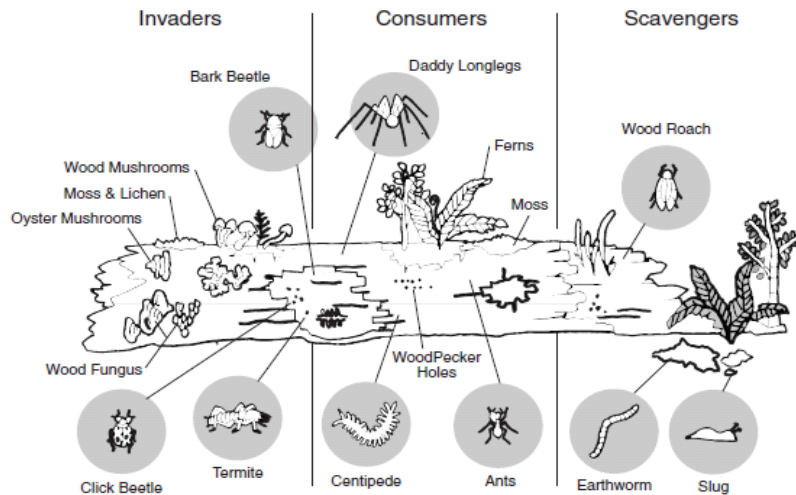


FBI in Action

FUNGUS, BACTERIA, & INVERTEBRATES

You can be an FBI agent and search the forest for fungus, bacteria and invertebrates on old trees.

Dead trees are recycled back into the forest soil through decomposition. During this process the rotting tree or log becomes the habitat for many organisms such as fungi, bacteria and invertebrates.



An invertebrate is an animal without a spine. Invertebrates that you can find in the forest are worms, insects, and other 'creepy crawlers'.

Wood-eating insects enter the tree by boring holes into the bark. They pave the way for other "invaders" such as bacteria and fungi that dissolve the wood structure and allow moisture to enter. This moisture makes the tree a great habitat or home for moss, lichen, and other plants. As they grow on the wood they cause the old tree to break apart and decompose. Many insects find this an ideal environment for laying their eggs.

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Fungi and bacteria provide lots of nutrients for consumers, such as insect larvae, which feed on other organisms and their remains. Insects like the moist habitat of the rotting log where they also find shelter and food.

The decomposing log houses many plants & animals that consume the log or each other, changing the structure of it and making a home for new organisms like snails, slugs and worms. Snails and slugs and worms can now decompose the dead log until it is soil again.

Now you are ready to be an FBI agent! Find an old decaying tree or log and draw a picture of it. Try identifying the fungi (mushrooms), bacteria and invertebrates on your log.

