



## Organic Remains Lessons

### Websites

#### General, Kid-Friendly Web Sites

##### [Nature's Recyclers Coloring Book](#)

Follow this web link to a PDF file for "Nature's Recyclers Coloring Book," which you can print and distribute in class.

( <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/ce/eeek/cool/natrec.htm> )

##### [Natureworks: Decomposers](#)

Drawn from an episode of Natureworks ( New Hampshire public television), this web page begins: "When plants and animals die, they become food for decomposers like bacteria, fungi, and earthworms." It then describes each of the three types of organisms.

( <http://www.nhptv.org/natureworks/nwep11b.htm> )

##### [Animal Games for Kids – Kids Corner](#)

A great child-friendly website that offers a variety of animal games to reinforce what children have learned in the classroom. Game topics include: animal classification, producers and consumers, food chain, animal diet, endangered animals, and animal characteristics.

(<http://www.sheppardsoftware.com/content/animals/kidscorner/gamesforkids.htm>)

#### Reference for Teachers

##### [Decomposition](#)

This site explains the process and importance of decomposition and contains images of a rabbit decomposing over several months.

( <http://www.countrysideinfo.co.uk/decompos.htm> )

##### [Forest Floor Terrarium](#)

This site explains how to set up a forest floor terrarium in the classroom.

( <http://www.cas.muohio.edu/scienceforohio/Terrarium/index.html> )

##### [There's Life in Dead Trees](#)

These sites provide detailed information about rotting logs.

( <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/nr/wildlife/animalinn/whattodo.htm> )



### [Oetzi the Iceman](#)

This site contains information and links to other sites about the world's oldest and best-preserved mummy. Believed to be 5,300 years old, the Iceman was discovered in 1991 in the Italian Alps.

( <http://www.crystalinks.com/oetzi.html> )

### [Rotten Luck: The Role of Downed Wood in Ecosystems](#)

Download a short, well illustrated brochure that describes the important roles played by fallen trees.

( <http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfd/pubs/Docs/Bro/Bro24.htm> )



## Organic Remains Lessons

### Books

If you have a budget for purchasing books, Science Companion especially recommends these titles to supplement the lessons:

- **A Dead Log (Small Worlds)** by Jen Green
- **The Magic School Bus Meets the Rot Squad: A Book About Decomposition** by Joanna Cole

#### **Decomposition and Nutrient Recycling**

The books listed below offer comprehensive information about the organisms and processes involved in decomposition and nutrient cycling.

#### **Compost Critters**

By Bianca Lavies. (1993, Dutton Books)

This grade-appropriate book describes what happens in a compost pile and how creatures, from bacteria and mites to millipedes and earthworms, aid in the process of turning compost into humus.

#### **Dirt (Jump into Science)**

By Steve "The Dirtmeister" Tomecek; illustrated by Nancy Woodman. (2002, National Geographic Children's Books)

This age-appropriate and informative book features lively illustrations of a star-nosed mole, who guides readers through the underground world. Readers find out what makes up soil, what lives in soil, how soil helps things grow, and how soil forms. They also learn why soil is sometimes at risk.

#### **Dirt: The Scoop on Soil**

By Natalie M. Rosinsky; illustrated by Sheree Boyd. (2002, Picture Window Books)

Illustrated with simplistic pictures, this book describes what soil is made of and briefly explains that decomposers put "more food back into the humus." Available in a Spanish language edition.



### **Dirty, Rotten, Dead?**

By Jerry Emory; illustrated by T. Taylor Bruce. (1996, Hartcourt)

This book discusses death, decomposition, and life with dramatic large-size illustrations of nature in action.

### **Everyone Poops (My Body Science Series)**

By Taro Gomi; translated by Amanda Mayer Stinchecum. (2001, Kane/Miller Book Publishers)

Written for a preschool audience, this book makes an important point that even elementary students need to remember: everyone poops.

### **The Gift of the Tree**

By Alvin Tresselt; illustrated by Henri Sorenson. (1992, HarperCollins)

Originally published under the title *The Dead Tree*, this book captures the role of an oak tree in the cycle of nature, as a living tree, a decomposing organism, and a source of support for new life.

### **The Giggler Treatment**

By Roddy Doyle; illustrated by Brian Ajhar. (2001, Arthur A. Levine Books)

Indulge your class's sense of humor, and read them this book. An excerpt: "The Gigglers have always been there. Since the first dog did its first poo. Since the first caveman grunted at his first cave child. He stomped out of the cave, straight onto a huge lump of prehistoric poo."

### **A Handful of Dirt**

By Raymond Bial. (2000, Walker & Company)

This informative book introduces readers to dirt dwellers, from the tiniest protozoan through myriad invertebrates to the mammals and reptiles whose burrows aerate the earth. All are depicted in large, sharp, full-color photographs.

### **In the Woods: Who's Been Here?**

By Lindsay Barret George. (1998, Greenwillow Books)

This is a beautifully illustrated book about a girl, a boy, and their dog exploring the autumn woods. The reader will be drawn into the brilliant lifelike illustrations noticing such things as an empty nest, a gnawed branch, feathers, and bones.



### **Life in a Bucket of Soil**

By Alvin Silverstein and Virginia Silverstein. (2000, Dover Publications)

This fascinating book introduces students to industrious ants, tunnel-building earthworms, snails and slugs, beetles, and many other creatures inhabiting and affecting the soil.

### **A Log's Life**

By Wendy Pfeffer; illustrated by Robin Brickman. (2007, Aladdin)

This beautifully illustrated book details the life, death, and decay of an oak tree. The short story traces how animals use the log for food and shelter, and shows how the log eventually crumbles and becomes soil.

### **The Magic School Bus Meets the Rot Squad: A Book About Decomposition**

By Joanna Cole; illustrated by Bruce Degen. (1995, Scholastic)

In this age-appropriate book, the students in Ms. Frizzle's class tour a decomposing log to find out that nature recycles through the process of decomposition.

### **One Small Square: Backyard**

By Donald M. Silver; illustrated by Patricia J. Wynne and Dianne Ettl. (1997, McGraw Hill)

Part of the critically acclaimed One Small Square series, this book illustrates and describes the numerous organisms that live in the soil and plants of a backyard. It includes the animals and microorganisms that recycle leaf litter, animal droppings, and dead plants and animals.

### **Sea Otter Inlet**

By Celia Godkin. (2001, Fitzhenry and Whiteside Limited)

This well-illustrated story tells what happens when hunters decimate a sea otter population. The sea urchins (an otters' favorite food) multiply and devour the kelp beds, so that ultimately no creature can survive there...until a new group of otters arrives.

### **Under One Rock: Bugs, Slugs and other Ughs**

By Anthony D. Fredericks and Jennifer Dirubio. (2001, Dawn Publications)

This book for early-elementary readers contains an engaging story and vivid, close-up illustrations about an incredible community of organisms found living under rocks.