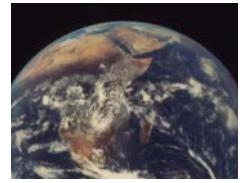




# Ecosystem Jungle

## Creating an Ecosystem



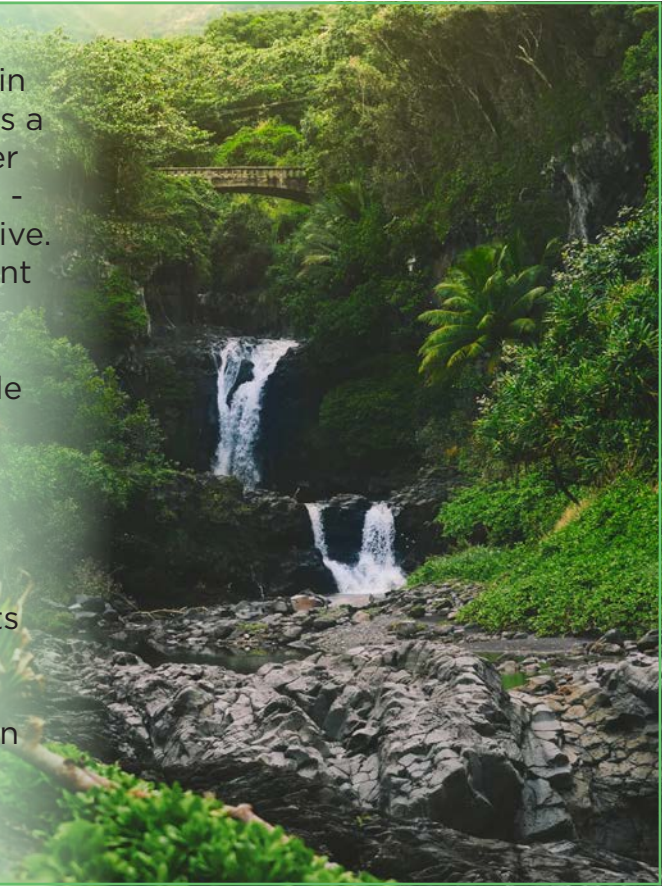
### Ecosystems are...

Ecosystems are a mass of living and nonliving things in one place. There are so many types of ecosystems. It's a jungle out there. Scientists study ecosystems to better understand how organisms relate to - and depend on - other organisms and nonliving things in order to survive. One way to study ecosystems is to look at the different ways organisms get food. It's a food chain.

**Producers** are organisms (such as plants) that are able to make their own food. The organisms use sunlight, water, and carbon dioxide to make food and oxygen.

**Consumers** are organisms that need to eat in order to survive. Some consumers eat plants, while other consumers eat animals, and still others eat both plants and animals.

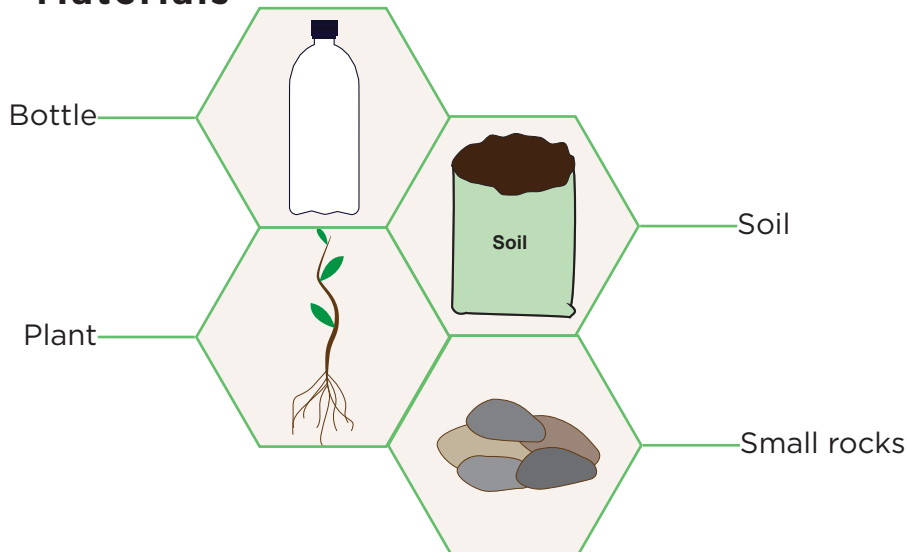
Some organisms, known as **decomposers**, break down waste products and dead organisms. Decomposers release nutrients back into the ecosystem.




### The Experiment

Create a soda bottle terrarium and watch your own ecosystem grow!

#### Materials



# Making the Terrarium

<b>Step 1</b>	Cut the bottle in half with the assistance of your caregiver.	
<b>Step 2</b>	Find some rocks outside and place them in the bottom of the bottle. The rocks filter the water.	
<b>Step 3</b>	Add the potting soil on top of the rocks.	
<b>Step 4</b>	Stick your finger in the middle of the soil and make a hole. This is where you will place the plant. Fill soil around the roots of the plants using your fingers. Press slightly around the bottom of the plant to keep it in place.	
<b>Step 5</b>	Give your plant a little water.	
<b>Step 6</b>	Shove the top of the bottle over the bottom. If the top is too tight, get a caregiver to slightly cut the sides of the bottle so that it will fit.	
<b>Step 7</b>	Screw top back on bottle.	
<b>Step 8</b>	Place in a sunny area. If the soil begins to look dry, drop a small amount of water into the bottle through the cap.	

## Dinner Talk

Talk with your family, siblings, friends, etc about this experiment.

- What happens to the plant inside of the terrarium?
- Why is it important to water the plant? How does the plant get water?
- Why is the sun important to the ecosystem?
- What do you think would happen if you added a worm or bug into your ecosystem?

## Extra Enrichment

- <https://kids.britannica.com/kids/article/ecosystem/433377>
- <https://www.generationgenius.com/ecosystems-for-kids/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PIX-WpfUvm4>

## Go to your local library and check out these books:

- *What If There Were No Bees?* by Suzanne Slade
- *Cactus Hotel* by Brenda Z. Guiberson
- *Many Biomes, One Earth* by Sneed B. Collard III
- *Why Oh Why Are Deserts Dry?* by Dr. Suess



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