

Recycling of Nutrients in a Forest



In this process, nutrients get absorbed, transferred, released and reabsorbed. It is a natural recycling system of mineral nutrients.

- Nutrients consumed by plants and animals are returned to the environment after death and decomposition and the cycle continues.
- Soil microbes play an important role in nutrient recycling. They decompose organic matter to release nutrients.
- After a certain period, the plants and animals die. The micro-organisms which break down the dead parts of plants and dead bodies of animals into simple substances such as mineral salts (or nutrients), carbon dioxide and water, which can be re-used by the plants, are called decomposers.
- The micro-organisms such as bacteria and fungi are decomposers. Bacteria and fungi are non-green organisms which cannot make their own food. They obtain their food from the dead parts of plants and dead bodies of animals.
- During the process of obtaining food, the bacteria and fungi decompose the matter present in the dead plants and animals into mineral salts, carbon dioxide and water. The mineral salts thus formed are called nutrients (for plants).
- The mineral salts (or nutrients) formed in this way mix with the soil of the forest. They make the soil fertile. These nutrients in the soil can be used again by the plants for their growth. The decomposers break down the animal waste into mineral salts which go into the soil as nutrients for plants.