

# Rotters and Recyclers

Let's look in a compost bin. There are lots of dead leaves, apple cores and vegetable peelings. They are slowly rotting into compost which will provide nutrients for new plants. Nutrients from compost are used to help plants grow. The plants also need sunlight energy, water and carbon dioxide. What helps the dead plant material to rot or decompose?

If you look carefully in the compost bin you will find minibeasts. Some minibeasts are recyclers. They eat the dead plants and break them into smaller bits. Worms, woodlice, millipedes, slugs, mites and microscopic animals munch dead plants.

Other minibeasts hide in the compost bin, but they eat living plants. Caterpillars and snails munch green plants. Spiders and centipedes are predators - they eat other living animals.

Fungi are the best rotters of all. Their tiny threads spread through dead plants as they use the plant material to help them grow. You may see the fungus fruit which are called toadstools. Bacteria are too tiny to see but they are also rotters.

Rotters and recyclers work best in warm and damp places.

Fill this compost bin by drawing and labelling all the plants and animals which are underlined in the text above.

