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NATURE'S RECYCLERS AND COMPOSTING

FACT SHEET

- Plant decomposers in a woodland are called fungi, i.e. mushrooms. They feed off dead leaves.
- Animal decomposers in a woodland are woodlice, millipedes and earthworms. They pull the leaves down into the soil and eat them under the surface.
- The decomposer's main function is to feed off leaf litter, break it down and return it to the soil to feed the woodland plants and trees.
- You can make a compost called "leaf mould" out of leaf litter by gathering up a sack of leaves and putting it somewhere dry to decompose. This greatly enriches the soil.
- Approximately 30% of our household waste, i.e. kitchen waste, can be prevented from going to landfill by composting it.
- What you can add to your compost heap/bin:
 - Raw fruit and vegetable waste
 - Paper and cardboard
 - Coffee grinds and tea bags
 - Grass cuttings
 - Woody material (smaller pruned branches, twigs, bark)

- What you should not add to your compost heap/bin:
 - Meat
 - Cooked food
 - Plastic
 - Nappies
 - Dog faeces
 - Glass
 - Diseased plants

- The animal decomposers that help break down your compost are:
 - Micro-organisms, i.e. bacteria, fungi and algae
 - Woodlice
 - Beatles
 - Earthworms

- A tiger worm is a special worm that lives in a wormery. They can eat half their own bodyweight in food every day and can live for up to 15 years. They love moist and warm conditions.

- All worms are hermaphrodites - each worm has both male and female reproductive organs, so all worms can have baby worms.

- In order for your compost to decompose successfully and quickly it needs the following:
 - Air
 - Water
 - Warmth
 - To be turned regularly
 - Green material (Grass cuttings, kitchen waste)
 - Brown material (paper, cardboard, straw)