

# DOES IT DECOMPOSE?

Decomposers have their hands full with all the things that fall in the forest naturally. It's up to us to make sure we don't add things that are difficult to decompose. Some things can take hundreds of years to decompose, so it's important that we pack out what we pack in.



SODA CAN  
**200 YEARS**  
TO DECOMPOSE



APPLE CORE  
**1 MONTH**  
TO DECOMPOSE



PLASTIC BOTTLE  
**450 YEARS**  
TO DECOMPOSE

## PACK IT IN, PACK IT OUT

Use this space to make a list of the things you bring with you on your hike. After your hike, check off each item to make sure you packed it out.

<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

**TRACK** your hike at

[kidsinparks.com](http://kidsinparks.com)

and get **FREE** prizes!



Thanks for joining us today!

Visit our website to find more TRACK Trail™ adventures near you!



## Follow us!

 @KidsInParks

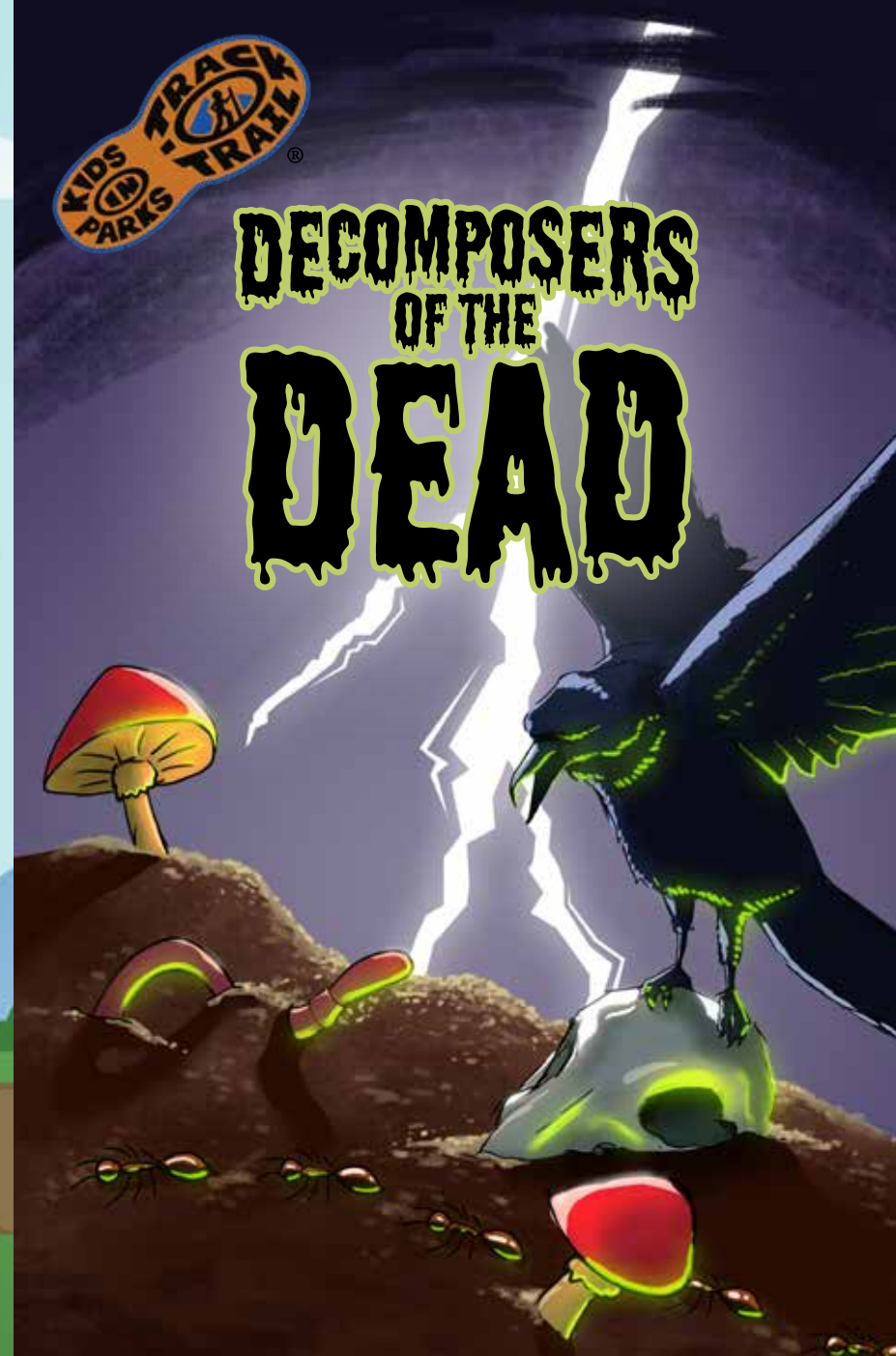
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# DECOMPOSERS OF THE DEAD



WHEN PLANTS AND ANIMALS DIE, AN IMPORTANT TYPE OF ORGANISM TAKES CARE OF THE MESS. SCAVENGERS AND DECOMPOSERS FEED ON DEAD THINGS AND RETURN THE ENERGY TO THE ECOSYSTEM. USE THIS BROCHURE TO LEARN ABOUT THE GREAT AND GROSS WORLD OF DECOMPOSERS.

# GROSS-OUT GUARDIANS

Decomposers and Scavengers are the cleanup crews of nature. They break down debris like logs, dead animals, and animal poop to keep the world clean. It's gross work, but somebody has to do it. Let's explore the world of decomposers and scavengers!

## WORLD WITHOUT DECOMPOSERS

Without decomposers, every hike would be a difficult climb across piles of fallen trees, dead animals, and poop.

TRACK is buried in a pile of plant and animal debris. Think like a decomposer and find things along the trail that need decomposed to free him. **X** the items as you find them.

SCAT (POOP)

STICKS & LOGS

BONES

LEAVES

NUTS & SEEDS

HELP ME, OBI DE-COMPOSI!  
YOU'RE MY ONLY HOPE!

# DEAD FOR DINNER

**Scavengers** are the first on the scene when an animal dies. Attracted by the smell of rotting meat, they search for the body. You might see vultures circling in the sky or flies buzzing as they look for food.

**That's right. They eat dead things.** It may sound gross, but they eat the meat, called carrion, and return the nutrients to the soil when they poop.

## Ready for a Scavenger 'Scavenger Hunt'?

Find as many scavengers on your hike as you can.

VULTURE

CROW

OPOSSUM

FLESH FLY

LARVA

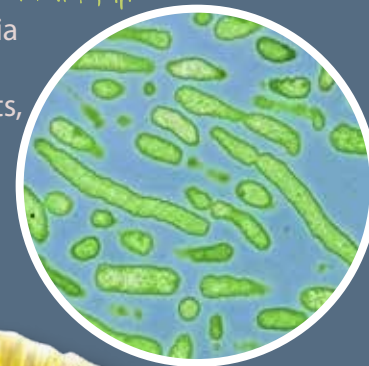
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COCKROACH

EARTHWORM

# MICROSCOPIC MUNCHERS

Decomposers like fungi and bacteria use chemicals to break down and feed on dead matter. They eat plants, animals, poop, leaves, and other things. Many decomposers are too small to see, but mushrooms are a great way to see them in action.



BROWN

YELLOW

BLUE

RED

WHITE

ORANGE

PINK

PURPLE

Mushrooms come in different shapes and colors. **How many can you find?**

**STOP**  
Mushrooms can be poisonous. Don't touch!

## LOGS FOR LUNCH

It can take over 100 years for fungi and bacteria to completely "eat" a fallen tree. As you hike the trail, count logs you find in different stages of decomposition.

1 2 3 4 5