

Glossary

acid rain:	precipitation with a pH less than 5.6 that forms in the atmosphere when certain pollutants (usually sulphur oxides and nitrogen oxides) mix with water vapor.
angiosperm:	a flowering plant or tree characterized by seeds that are fully enclosed by fruits (ripened ovaries).
backyard composting:	using a bin or hole to break down plant waste, grass clippings, egg shells, dryer lint, coffee grounds, etc...
biodegradable:	a substance that can be broken down by natural factors such as microorganisms, weather, plants, or animals into simple stable compounds such as carbon dioxide, water, and minerals.
canopy:	the layer formed by the leaves and branches of trees or shrubs.
carbon dioxide:	(CO ₂) gas given off by humans and other living things via respiration and decomposition.
carnivore:	an organism who consumes only meat.
catkin:	a long flower cluster (such as on a willow tree).
cellulose:	a complex carbohydrate that constitutes the chief part of the cell walls of higher plants and yields fiber for many products.
chlorophyll:	a group of pigments that produce the green hue of plants, essential to photosynthesis.
conifers:	evergreens such as cedars, pines, firs, spruces, larches, junipers, and redwoods.
consumer:	an animal that consumes or eats a plant or animal.
crown:	the branches and leaves of a tree.
deciduous:	describes a plant/tree that loses all its leaves at the end of a growing season.
decomposer:	an organism that breaks down organic matter into inorganic form. (e.g. Fungi and bacteria decompose dead organisms and wastes into elements that can be used by other organisms).
defoliation:	the loss of leaves from plants.
dendrology:	a branch of botany devoted to the study of trees.
dispersal:	the method by which a tree's seeds are distributed.
ecosystem:	a community of all living organisms in an area along with all abiotic factors (nonliving environment) with which they interact.
erosion:	the dissolving, loosening, and wearing away of the land surface by wind or water.
evergreen:	a plant that retains its green leaves year round.
food chain:	the transfer of food energy from organisms in one nutritional level to those in another.
food web:	the complex and interlocking series of FOOD CHAINS.

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fossil fuels:	coal, oil, and natural gas that formed in the ground over millions of years from the remains of ancient plants and animals.
fungi:	small, often microscopic, plant-like organisms that absorb food directly through cell walls and lack chlorophyll and cellulose in their cell walls.
germination:	the process of seeds beginning to sprout and grow.
gymnosperm:	any class of seed plants that produce naked seeds not enclosed in fruit such as conifers.
habitat:	an area or type of environment in which an organism lives in that provides a plant or animal with adequate food, water, shelter, and living space.
hardwood:	a deciduous or broad-leaf tree.
heat island:	the increased temperatures in urban areas because of declining tree canopy.
herbivore:	an organism that feeds on only vegetation/plants.
humus:	decomposed material in the soil that is a highly complex mixture of organic and inorganic substances.
inorganic:	material derived from non-living material; non carbon based compounds.
interdependence:	a relationship in which things depend on one another for survival.
landfill:	a site for disposing of solid waste on land.
microorganism:	a living being too small to be seen by the naked eye, often aiding in the decomposition process.
natural resources:	those raw materials supplied by the earth and its processes.
naturalist:	a specialist who studies and/or teaches about nature.
nutrients:	substances required for growth and development.
old growth forest:	forests containing trees often hundreds, sometimes thousands, of years old.
omnivore:	organisms that eat both animals and plants.
organic:	material derived from a living source.
ovary:	the part of the flower where the eggs are housed and fertilization occurs.
phloem:	the plant tissue that transports dissolved nutrients from the leaves to the other parts of the plant. Also called inner bark.
photosynthesis:	the process by which green plants, algae, and some bacteria manufacture simple sugars (carbohydrates) in the presence of sunlight, carbon dioxide, and water.
pigment:	a chemical substance that reflects only certain light rays and thus imparts color to an object.
pistil:	female part of the flower where pollination occurs when the pollen is deposited against its tip (stigma).

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pollination:	the transfer of pollen from the male part of the plant (stamen) to the female part of the plant (stigma).
producer:	a plant.
renewable resource:	a naturally occurring raw material or form of energy which has the capacity to replenish itself through ecological cycles and sound management practices. (the sun, wind, falling water, and trees)
scarification:	to make small cuts or scratches to a seed coat to help with germination.
seedling:	a small tree.
stamen:	male part of a flower where pollen is produced.
stewardship:	the concept of responsible caretaking; the concept is based on the premise that we don't own resources, but are managers of resources and are responsible to future generations for their condition.
stoma:	a microscopic opening in the surface of a leaf that allows gases to pass in and out.
transpiration:	the process in which water is absorbed by the root systems of plants, moves up through the plant (via the xylem), passes through pores (stomata) in the leaves and other plant parts, and then evaporates into the atmosphere as water vapor.
vermicomposting:	composting using redworms in the decomposition process.
xylem:	the complex woody tissue of higher plants that includes systems for transporting water, storing nutrients, and structural support.