

# Nature Recycles

Here is a tree with its many parts.  
It has leaves and branches, a trunk, roots and bark.

The leaves in the fall turn from bright green to brown.  
As the weather turns cooler, they fall to the ground.

First one leaf will fall and then many more,  
As leaves become leaf litter on the forest floor.

Who'll clean up this mess? What shall we do?  
Here come nature's recyclers, nature's clean-up crew.

Why do they clean up this leaf litter mess?  
'Cause dead leaves have nutrients that they like the best.

Nutrients are like food, found in things living and dead.  
Without them nothing could grow and all life would end.

Let's meet nature's recyclers and see how they toil.  
As they break down leaf litter and add nutrients to soil.



This is a slippery slug, a snail with no shell.  
It cleans floors of gardens, lawns and forests as well.



This is a mushroom, a plant that's not green.  
It breaks down leaf litter and keeps the woods clean.



This is a worm. What does it do?  
It digs under the leaves and chews them up too.



This is a beetle with a hard black shell.  
It chomps all the leaves on the ground where they fell.



This is a sowbug that hides in the dark.  
It munches on dead plants in your garden and park.



This is a millipede; try counting its feet.  
It crunches up plants and keeps the ground neat.

So nature's recyclers, as they crunch, munch and chew,  
Break leaves into pieces that become nutrients too.

Nutrients in the soil make trees big and strong.  
They're sucked up by tree roots when spring comes along.

Nutrients are like food, and for trees they are good.  
They help make new leaves, strong branches and wood.

And so, last year's brown leaf, that was part of the tree,  
Was changed into food to make the new leaves you see.

