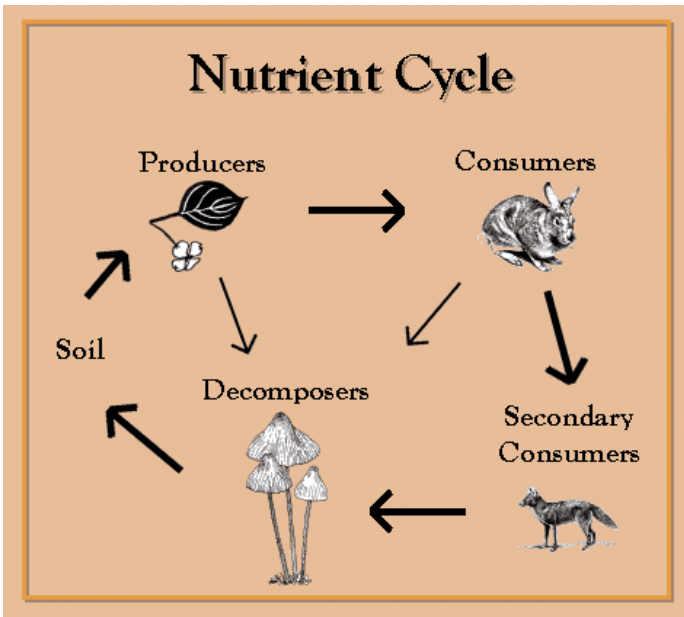


Student Introduction to Waste Management

Nature is really good at recycling living things. The picture below shows how energy and nutrients are exchanged between living things. In this unit, you will learn about the cycles of nature. You will also learn how human actions stop this cycle.



Plants (**PRODUCERS**) use energy from sunlight to make food.



Energy from plants goes to animals (**CONSUMERS**) when they eat them.



When plants or animals die, their bodies decompose (rot). **DECOMPOSERS**, like bacteria or fungus, break these dead things down into smaller pieces. This returns nutrients to the soil where it helps new plants to grow.



When humans make products like plastics, that aren't natural, they don't decompose (rot). This breaks the cycle.

If we **REDUCE**, **REUSE**, and **RECYCLE** materials, we can keep them from piling up as trash. Trash is a big problem in modern society.