

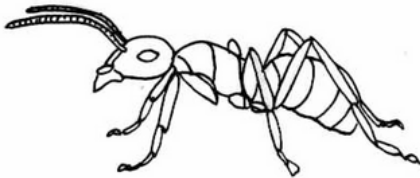
# Soil organisms cards

Print and cut out each card.

\*Suitable for students requiring extension.

\*\*Suitable for supported students.

**Ant\*\***

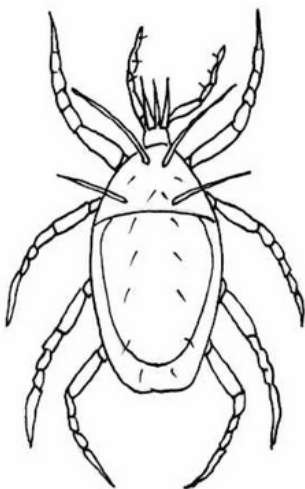


The tunnels in our nests help to loosen the soil. This makes the soil less hard and compact, so water can easily move through the soil.

We like to eat dead plants and other insects.

Bigger insects, amphibians, birds and mammals like to eat us!

**Mite\*\***



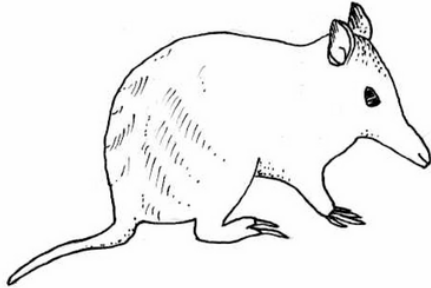
We like to eat dead organic matter in the soil.

We're pretty small, so hard to see, but other small animals can see us and like to eat us.

The animals that eat most of us are nematodes.



## Bandicoot

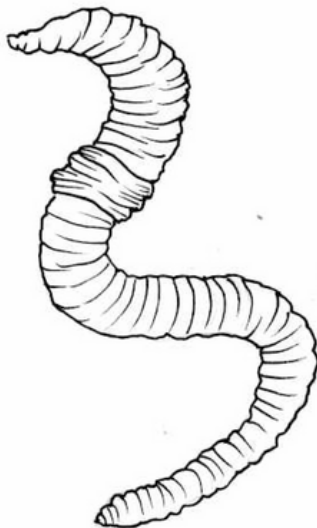


We like to dig burrows in the soil. This helps to keep the air in the soil, which makes the soil less compact and helps water to travel through the soil.

We like to eat roots, fungi, worms and insects in the soil. There aren't any things under the ground that will eat us, but above ground, it's a different story.

When we die, our bodies will eventually be broken down by bacteria, insects and other soil organisms, and we will become part of the soil.

## Earthworm



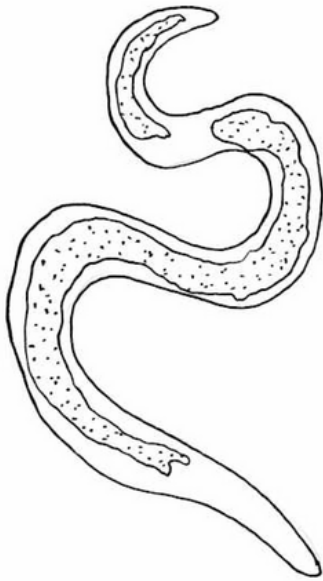
We like to eat dead plants; the poo we make from eating these plants is full of nutrients and goes into the soil where plants can eat it.

The tunnels that we make keep air moving through the soil, which makes the soil less compact, and helps water to travel through the soil.

We have to be careful sticking our heads up out of the soil because birds like to eat us!



## Nematode

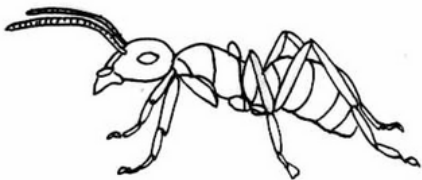


We like to eat mites, fungi and bacteria.

We need water in the soil because that's where we live - in the thin water layers surrounding soil particles!

We might be eaten by other nematodes or by small insects.

## Ant\*\*



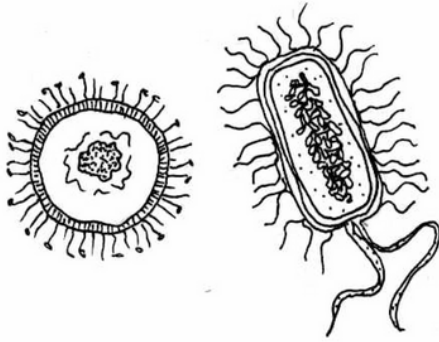
The tunnels in our nests help to loosen the soil. This makes the soil less hard and compact, so water can easily move through the soil.

We like to eat dead plants and other insects.

Bigger insects, amphibians, birds and mammals like to eat us!



## Bacteria\*



We are tiny creatures, yet we are so important to the soil!

We eat dead plant material and take nutrients that other organisms have released, and we move them around the soil so that the soil is a healthy place for plants to grow (the plants love to absorb these nutrients!).

We are eaten by nematodes and fungi.

## Tardigrade



We like to eat fungi, plant roots, bacteria, and nematodes, and we help to make these things easier to eat for other organisms.

The bad news is that some nematodes also like to eat us! Also, some types of tardigrades will also eat other types of tardigrades!

Like nematodes, we need water in the soil because that's where we live: in the thin layers of water that surround soil particles.



## Plant



We grow in the soil!

We provide plant materials that soil organisms break down and eat. Our roots help to keep the soil stable by stopping the wind and from rain carrying the soil away (this is one type of erosion).

Most of us have roots that help to bring air into the soil, and this helps the water to move through the soil.

We absorb nutrients from the soil.

