



The Morton Arboretum Pre-Trip Activity for “Eco Explorers” Vocabulary List

To maximize the effectiveness of your “Eco Explorers” program at The Morton Arboretum, please familiarize your students with the following vocabulary words. This will be most effective just before the program.

Adaptation – the slow process of change in the physical or behavioral traits of a plant or animal due to some environmental pressure

Consumer – an animal or plant that eats other living things to survive

Decomposer – an animal or plant that digests and breaks down dead material, converting it to a nutrient for other plants or animals

Decomposition – the process where dead material is broken down into simple elements that can be returned to the soil and atmosphere

Ecosystem – a community of living (biotic) organisms and non-living (abiotic) environmental factors working together as a unit

Food Web – all of the interactions between predators and prey, in which plants and animals obtain food, within a community or ecosystem

Producer – a plant that produces its own food, some of which will be passed through the food web when the plant is eaten or decomposes