



## Termites in rainforests

### What is happening?

Termite activity increases in rainforests during droughts. Termite poo containing water and nutrients increases soil moisture and fertility.

### How do we know this?

- Scientists compared rainforests with and without termites. They measured the depth of leaf litter, soil moisture, soil nutrients and the survival of seedlings.

### Why is this important?

- Climate change has increased the number of droughts and this threatens the survival of plants, animals and fungi living in the rainforests.
- During a drought, some decomposers such as soil microbes and fungi may not survive. This means that dead plant matter might not be broken down, there could be fewer nutrients in the soil and eventually the soil may be unable to support future plant growth.
- If termites can improve the soil during a drought, forests with termites might survive droughts.

### What else can you find out?

- Termites can be serious pests when they invade homes. Are they our friends or foe?
- Why do you think it is important that rainforests survive? Use the QR code to find out about different kinds of rainforests and the species that live there.

<https://video.link/w/YvAyd>

## KEY FACTS

### Termites

Termites are insects. There are over 2,000 different types of termites around the world.

### Decomposers

Termites are *decomposers*. They eat wood and dead plant matter. They break down what they eat into the substances that plants need for growth.

### Rainforests

A rainforest is a thick forest of tall trees in areas where there is a lot of rain. They are home to a wide variety of plants and animals.

### Climate change

This refers to a long-term change in temperatures and weather patterns on Earth. Human activity such as burning fossil fuels is responsible for climate change.

