

Deciduous Forest

The species of trees, such as the oak, that grow in this type of forest produce foliage that falls during the cold months of the year. Great numbers of insects feed on abundant thin and easily consumed leaves during the spring and summer. Many birds also seek out deciduous trees for larva and worms that hide among the leaves, and some birds can even poke into the bark to feed on small animals that live within the trees. ●

FALLOW DEER
Dama dama
It mainly eats grass and acorns. It travels in herds of 100 or more. Its dappled coat of fur provides camouflage from predators.

BURYING BEETLE
Nicrophorus investigator
It buries the bodies of small dead vertebrates whole. The burying beetle deposits its eggs in these buried carcasses.

SHEETWEB SPIDER
Lepthyphantes zelatus

MILLIPEDE
Ommatoiulus rutilans

EARTHWORM
Lombricus terrestris

WOOD LOUSE
Porcellio scaber

THE ROLE OF INVERTEBRATES

Insects, centipedes, nematodes, and other invertebrates that eat plants and decaying wood live beneath the fallen leaves in the forest. After a period of hibernation, the arrival of spring allows the insects to emerge in great numbers. They are the base of the forest's complex food web.

Fallen Leaves

Deciduous trees produce a deep layer of decomposing leaves rich in insects, fungi, and bacteria. These organisms provide vital nutrients to the soil by breaking down fallen leaves. As earthworms crawl through this matter, they ingest and later expel it. In doing so, they help mix buried and surface materials. Their tunnels also help aerate the soil and drain off rainwater. The transformation from fallen leaves to usable nutrients can last two years; it is a process that brings about the growth of new plants.

RECYCLING
Fungi are important organisms that hasten the decomposition of wood and the remains of plants and animals.



BRAMBLING
Fringilla montifringilla
This bird, which makes a buzzing nasal sound, builds a cup-shaped nest lined with lichen, bark, roots, stems, hair, and feathers. Bramblings can gather into flocks of millions of birds.

GREEN WOODPECKER
Picus viridis



COMMON PIPISTRELLE
Pipistrellus pipistrellus



COMMON PHEASANT
Phasianus colchicus



WESTERN EUROPEAN HEDGEHOG
Erinaceus europaeus



EUROPEAN RABBIT
Oryctolagus cuniculus



TUNNEL BUILDER

This rabbit digs complex tunnel systems, called warrens, which have many emergency entrances and exits.

RED SQUIRREL
Sciurus vulgaris



EURASIAN EAGLE OWL
Bubo bubo



NIGHT HUNTER
This solitary animal spends the day sitting quietly in the trees, and it hunts at night. It is a superpredator that can kill other owls and birds of prey. Its low cry can be heard about 1.2 miles (2 km) away.

Oak Tree

This deciduous species, which can grow to a very large size, is the home, nursery, and cupboard for numerous animals that hide inside it. A large oak can support about 400,000 caterpillars. The oak protects itself from insect attacks by quickly regenerating buds and producing tannin as a repellent. When the *Andricus kollari* wasp deposits its eggs in the tree, the oak secretes a substance that activates the growth of tree cells around the eggs. The resulting gall surrounds the larva and prevents further attacks on the rest of the tree. At the same time, the oak provides food and shelter for the larvae. The oak is long-lived (more than 600 years), and its wood is among the most highly prized of all trees. Wood from oak trees is tough, and it can be used to build everything from furniture to palaces.

ROOTING SNOOT

The wild boar of Eurasia uses its peculiar snout like a mechanical

shovel to unearth food (roots, fungi, and small animals) among the dead leaves on the forest floor. It can measure up to 6.6 feet (2 meters) in length. The males live alone, except during mating season.

PINE MARTEN

Martes martes
Agile and capable of leaping significant distances, the pine marten also has claws that allow it to be a good climber. Its fur is also highly valued.

WILD BOAR
Sus scrofa



FAT DORMOUSE

Glis glis
Also known as the edible dormouse, this species of squirrel hibernates for six months. It communicates by means of squeaks.

BURROWS

Holes or tunnels in the ground dug by certain animals for use as temporary living space. Burrows are common in deciduous forests, and they are constructed by rabbits, marmots, and other rodents. Burrows are used to hide from predators and as shelter from the weather. It is estimated that the burrow of a single marmot can occupy 35 square feet (1 cubic meter) and requires the removal of 660 pounds (300 kg) of soil.

