

## Snug-as-a-Bug...In a Log!

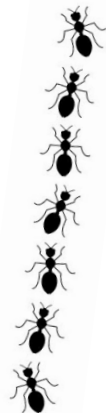


What do bugs do in the winter? Like most animals, they either move (migrate) or they find a safe place to sleep. Rotten logs and leaf litter (thick piles of old leaves) are great safe places for many bugs to spend the winter. A fun winter activity is to find a log or pile of old leaves and look through it to see what you can find.

- 1) Take a bucket or bag with you to a local park or woodlot. Make sure the log or branch is old and starting to rot. In a leaf pile, gently dig down to the lower, older layers.
- 2) Take the log or leaves back home and let it warm up for a few hours. \*

















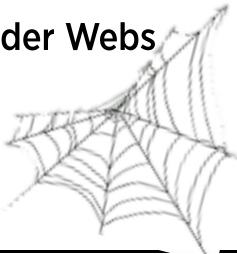
- 3) Place the log or leaves on a hard floor, or put down lots of paper or a sheet for easy clean up.
- 4) Find a small, sturdy stick, like a chopstick, pencil or small screwdriver.
- 5) **Gently** start digging in the log or pulling apart the layers of leaves. The more careful and gentle you are, the more likely you will find critters to observe. Be careful not to smash them (even the spiders), they're doing an important job. Remember, you are exploring THEIR home!
- 6) Use the *What can YOU find?* page to figure out what you are seeing.



*\*Note: Be aware that as the log or leaves warm up, some of the bugs may wake up and move around! So they don't escape into your house, carefully place them in a jar with a lid while you explore. When you are finished, pour the bugs back into the log or leaves and set all of it outside.*



## What can YOU find in logs or leaf litter?

<p>Ant</p> 	<p>Snail</p> 	<p>Lichen</p> 
<p>Beetle larva</p> 	<p>Centipede</p> 	<p>Insect Eggs</p> 
<p>Wood roach</p> 	<p>Spider</p> 	<p>Slug</p> 
<p>Beetle</p> 	<p>Fungus</p> 	<p>Pillbug or Sowbug</p> 
<p>Insect Molt</p> 	<p>Harvestman/ Daddy Long Legs</p> 	<p>Spider Webs</p> 

Find something not on this sheet? Visit this online insect guide to help identify your discovery. <https://www.insectidentification.org/insects-by-state.asp?>

# Decomposing Log Key

## Holes

Holes bigger than a dime



Woodpecker (other than sapsucker)



round, barely smaller than a dime



Carpenter Bee



Holes smaller than a dime

close together in rows



Sapsucker (type of Woodpecker)



very small, deep, not in rows, round, D-shaped, or oval



Boring Beetle



## Tunnels

Clean, straight tunnels, with smooth edges



Bjorn Friishe/  
Creative Commons

Carpenter Ant



Kevin Beals

Smooth and shallow designs, just under the bark



Kevin Beals

Bark Beetle



Stigo/  
Wikimedia Commons

Rough and ragged tunnels with dirt and wood bits inside



Kevin Beals

Termite



KSchneider/  
Creative Commons

## Crumbling Wood

Yellow or white, spongy or stringy wood

White Rot Fungus



Cubes of brown wood

Brown Rot Fungus





## Decomposing Log Key Continued

### Burnt Wood

black bark or hollow tree



Mingo Hagen/Creative Commons

Forest Fire →



H Dragon/Creative Commons

### Scraped Bark

scrape marks on tree



Ellen Macdonald/Creative Commons

deer, bear, squirrel,  
porcupine, mouse, rabbit,  
moose or beaver



Deer: glynn424/Creative Commons; Beaver: Needsmoreitalin/Wikimedia Commons; Rabbit: Thermos/Wikimedia Commons

### Chew Marks

tooth marks low on tree



Gordon E. Robertson/Creative Commons

Beaver →



Marie Hale/Creative Commons

### Axe or Saw Marks

smooth slice of wood



Kevin Beals

Human Logging →



H Dragon/Creative Commons

Look for evidence to help answer these questions to help you explain the mystery:

- Which suspects were involved?
- Where was the tree, and what made it fall?
- What was the order of events?