Science 14

Unit D: Matter and energy in the environment

Biodegradable materials and farming

A plastic fork and an apple core

- An apple core can become soil material in a compost pile.
- A disposable plastic fork stays recognizable long after the meal is over.



Biodegradable and compost

- A biodegradable material is one decomposers can break into substances ecosystems already cycle.
- Compost is a pile where food scraps and yard waste become soil material.

Key terms

biodegradable

A material that decomposers can break into substances the environment already cycles.

compost

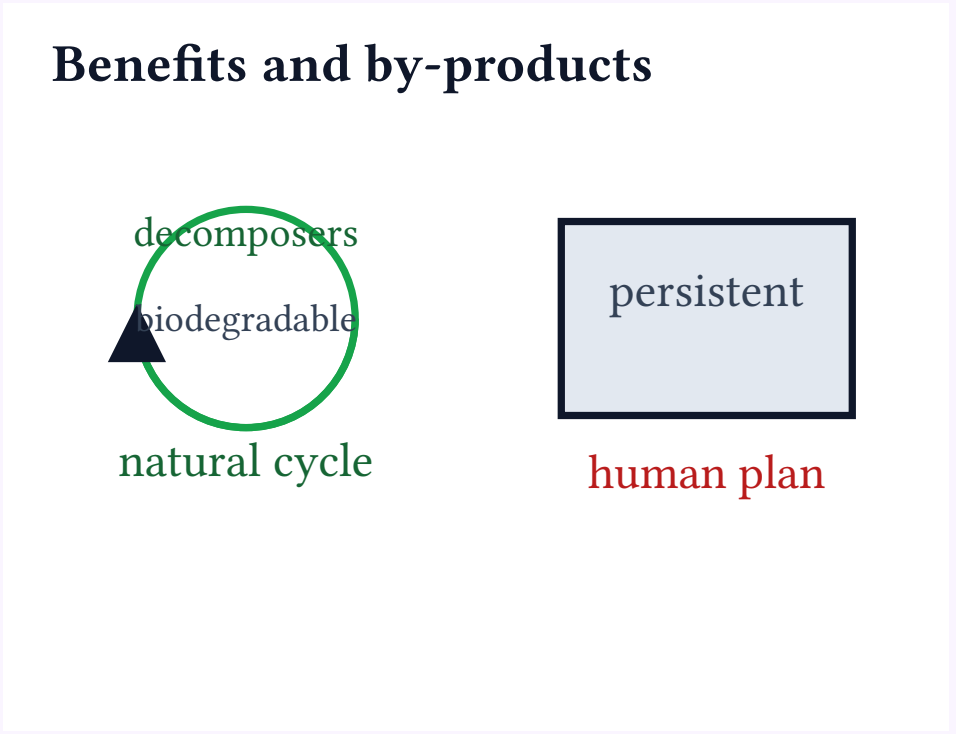
A pile of food scraps and yard waste where decomposers turn organic matter into soil material.

persistent material

A human-made or concentrated material, such as many plastics or heavy metals, that stays in the environment.

Benefits and by-products

- A biodegradable leftover can join a natural cycle through decomposers.
- A persistent leftover needs a human plan because it stays in place.



Apple core and plastic spoon

- The apple core breaks down in the compost.
- The plastic spoon stays intact.

A package from a store

- The store label leaves the question open.
- Watch whether decomposers change the material.

Core and plastic

- An apple core and a plastic fork leave the table.
- Say which leftover composts and which one needs a human recycling plan.

Needs and by-products

- Compost results tell you which samples decomposers can change.
- Fishing, pesticides, cars and fertilizers each have a need and a consequence.

Image credits

Niwrat, Compost bin with compost, CC BY-SA 4.0