

NAME: _____
FOREST LITTER

Trees do something very important for water... they litter. That's right, trees litter all over the forests. Every year trees drop tons of leaves, twigs and branches on every acre of forest. That's a lot of litter.

Unlike garbage, however, this is good litter. It helps hold our soil in place and keeps it from washing into streams. Like a rug on the forest floor, it breaks the fall of raindrops. By catching the raindrops and gently releasing them into the ground, the soil is not harmed. And the soil stays in place.



The forest litter also holds water like a sponge. Slowly this water is released to do many good things. It keeps the streams flowing. It gives thirsty trees a drink. Some water goes down deep into the ground to refill the underground reservoirs.

A big problem is protecting the forest litter. Every year forest fires destroy millions of trees. They burn the soil cover, too. Once the soil is in the water it can wash away when it rains. Some of the soil washes into rivers, streams and lakes. When this happens, it is called **erosion**. Once the soil is in the water, it can settle to the bottom. This is called **sedimentation**. Sedimentation is harmful to our waters. It fills up our lakes and makes our water dirty. Now you know how forest fires can cause water pollution. So it is important to prevent them. This activity shows how to stop runaway runoff.

Use one lb. coffee cans with 8 holes in a 2" circle drilled in the bottom. Place clear jars under the holes.

