

PROBLEM

Each year many tonnes of leaves and wood from terrestrial plants are deposited in lakes and rivers and eventually carried out to sea. You might wish to study the rate of decay of various types of plant material under water.

INFORMATION

1. Look up Project 4-25 for some general suggestions.
2. Mesh bags of leaves of different plants can be placed in streams, lakes or the ocean firmly tied with nylon fishing line to something heavy like a brick or attached to a jetty pile etc. Don't forget to make detailed notes on exactly where you place your material.
3. You may wish to compare the rate of decay of material submerged at different depths or buried in the substratum.
4. It might be of interest to compare the rate of decay in an anaerobic stagnant swamp mud and a fast flowing clear stream.

DESIGN OF EXPERIMENT

1. Refer to Project 4-25.
2. How might the decay organisms in the aquatic and marine situations differ from those in a terrestrial situation?

REFERENCES

As Project 4-25.

Sieburth, J. McN (1979) *Sea Microbes* (Oxford University Press : New York).