

# Forest Characters

## TEACHER PAGE

Directions: Print out the cards double-sided, so that the picture is on one side and the text on the other.

### S.T. – The Short-tailed Shrew



Short-tailed shrews live throughout the eastern United States.

### Sitta – The Nuthatch



Nuthatches, which belong to the genus *Sitta*, are tree-climbing birds. Some nuthatch species have a black “cap” on their heads.

# Forest Characters

---

## Shrews:

- Are small—but fierce—mammals about the size of a mouse.
- Have a long nose and sharp, pointy teeth.
- Can attack and kill prey much bigger than them. Their teeth contain venom!
- Mostly eat insects like beetles, grasshoppers, or wasps, but can also eat small birds and snakes.
- Live in and under moist soil and leaf litter.



## Nuthatches:

- Have large heads and short tails and legs.
- Eat insects hidden in the bark of tree trunks and limbs. They also like large seeds and nuts.
- Are very active and quite agile. They can climb both up and down tree trunks, head first!
- Flock in the winter with other forest birds like chickadees and titmice.
- Have long wings that reach almost to the tips of their tails.



# Forest Characters

## Millie – The Millipede



The name “millipede” comes from the Latin words *mille* (“thousand”) and *pes* (“foot”).

## The Earthworm

About 6,000 different species of earthworms live worldwide. Each earthworm has both male and female reproductive organs.



# Forest Characters

---

## Millipedes:

- Are long, slow-moving animals that do not bite people.
- Have 30 or more pairs of legs. Despite their name, no one has ever found one with 1,000 legs!
- Have hard bodies made of lots of rings, or segments.
- Are vegetarians that eat decaying leaves and other dead plant matter.
- Usually tunnel in soil. They may be found under bark, stones, or old wood, or in damp garbage.



## Earthworms:

- Usually grow to be only a few inches long, but some species can grow up to 14 inches.
- Have bodies made up of small ring-like segments called annuli. They breathe through their skin.
- Normally live in soil and in moist leaves that have fallen to the ground.
- Move nutrients and minerals from deep in the soil to the surface, helping to create healthy soil.
- Can eat a third of their body weight in a day.





# Forest Characters

## The White Grub



White grubs can be found in almost every part of the world.

## The Black Beetle

Black beetle is the common name for over 2,200 species of beetles found in North America.



# Forest Characters

---

## White grubs:

- Are the larvae of many different species of scarab beetles.
- Are naturally C-shaped.
- Feed mostly on the roots of plants underground, but also eat decaying plants and animals.
- Become pupa and then undergo metamorphosis to become adult beetles.
- Are considered agricultural pests in the United States.



## Black beetles:

- Like to live in moist environments and can often be found under leaves, logs, and stones.
- Are predators! They will hunt and eat caterpillars, slugs, worms, and even other beetles.
- Cannot fly but can climb and run quite fast.
- Generally do not bite people, but some are able to using their large mandibles (jaws).
- Are often non-native to North America. Many of the species living here were introduced from Europe.

