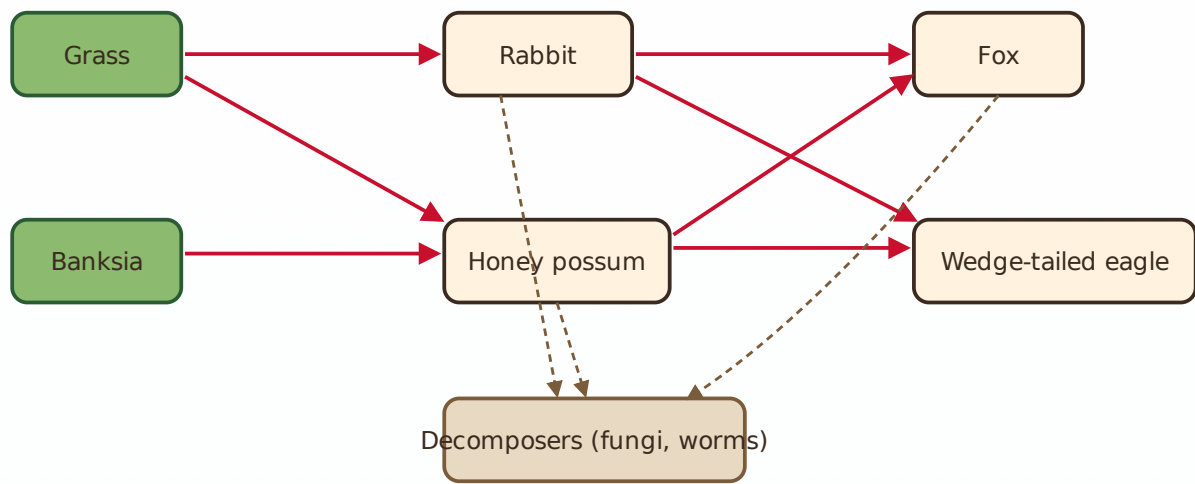


Food Webs and Decomposers

From food chains to food webs

In nature, most living things eat more than one kind of food, and are eaten by more than one animal. When we join lots of food chains together, we get a food web.



A food web joins several chains. Red arrows show who eats whom (pointing to the eater). The brown dashed arrows show that when living things die, decomposers break them down — returning nutrients to the soil for the producers.

Decomposers (like fungi, worms and bacteria) break down dead plants and animals and return their nutrients to the soil. Producers use those nutrients to grow — so the energy and nutrients keep cycling around the web.

Working with the web

Q1. Look at the food web above. Write down **two** things the fox could get energy from.

Q2. Why is it useful for an animal to have more than one food source? Think about what happens if one food runs out.

Q3. Explain the job of a decomposer. Why would an ecosystem be in trouble without them?

Q4. Sort these Western Australian animals into the table: *numbat*, *red fox*, *rock wallaby*, *feral cat*, *emu*, *European rabbit*, *bobtail lizard*, *cane toad*.

Indigenous (native) species	Introduced species

Q5. Here is a food chain: **grass → rock wallaby → wedge-tailed eagle**. Foxes are introduced and also hunt rock wallabies. Explain what could happen to this food chain if lots of foxes moved into the area.

Aboriginal peoples have cared for native animals and their Country for tens of thousands of years and know these food webs deeply. Looking after native species helps keep the whole ecosystem in balance.