

Succession Vocabulary

Succession - the gradual process of community development, re-growth (from tens, hundreds or thousands of years).

Primary Succession- a change in an environment where soil never existed before. Examples include recently formed volcanic lava and rock revealed when glaciers melt.

Secondary Succession- a change in an environment where soil already exists. Examples include areas destroyed by forest fire, clear-cutting, or insect epidemics.

Climax Community - The final stage of succession. All of the trees/plants are have formed into a mature forest.

Pioneer Species - The first species to colonize or grow in an area. Lichen, moss and small grasses are able to grow after a major disturbance due to the lack of soil or nutrients.

Opportunistic species - Plants that grow later after better soil has been made. Larger grasses, weeds and shrubs take advantage of the work done by the pioneer species, replacing pioneer species.

Biotic Factors- Living things. They change communities over time. Insect epidemics can kill trees. Overgrazing can selectively remove species of plants from a forest.

Abiotic factors- Non-living things. They can cause the need for re-growth or succession.

Biodiversity - A variety of life. Many living things in a specific area.