

Reading and Questions

Review pp. 8-10 in the *Exploring Ecology* booklet. As you read, pay attention to the roles of oxygen and carbon dioxide in photosynthesis. A common idea is that plants are the primary producers of energy. While this is true, plants also release oxygen and water back into the environment. As you read, consider the important role that plants play in releasing oxygen and water into the environments in which they are found.

1. By what process do plants utilize carbon dioxide and water and release oxygen?

2. What will happen if the process of photosynthesis stops in a plant? In all plants?

3. In what way might the release of oxygen back into the environment be harmful to a plant that is found in a dry region (HINT: Consider how a plant produces oxygen)?

4. Consider the energy pyramid (p. 10). Why do you think it is important that the base of the pyramid (plants) contain the most abundant organisms? How does this relate to the cycling of oxygen?