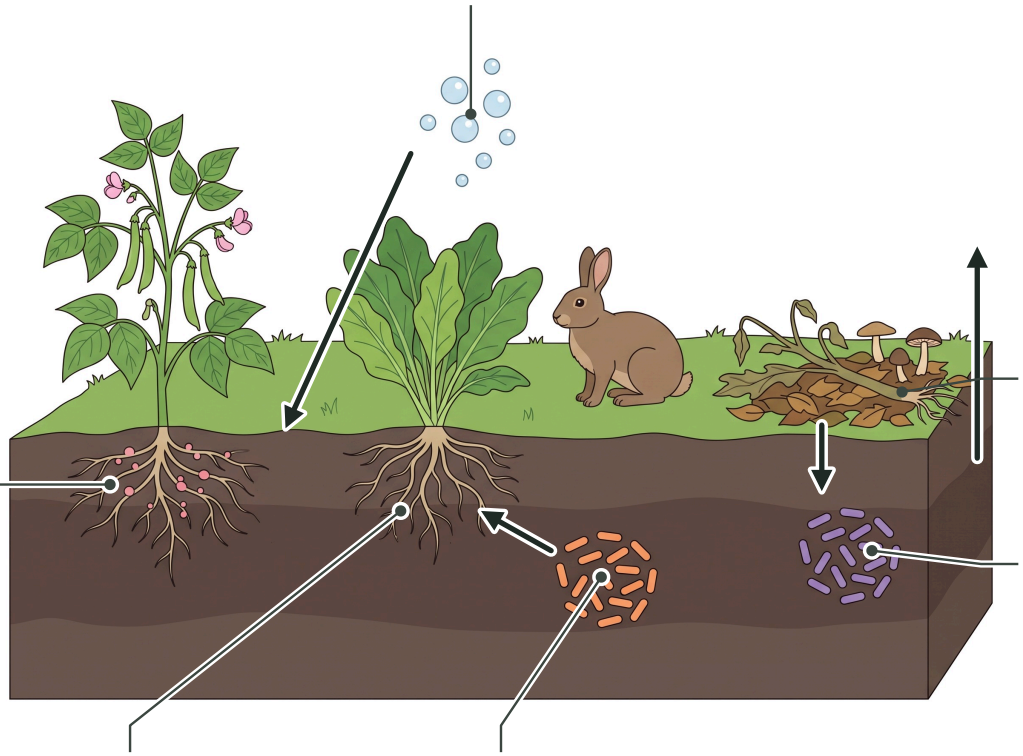
THE NITROGEN CYCLE

ECOSYSTEMS *What each part does*

The nitrogen cycle is how nitrogen moves between the air, the soil and living things.

About 78 percent of the air, but plants cannot use it as a gas.

Nitrogen in the atmosphere



Nitrogen fixation

Bacteria take a gas from the air and change it into a form plants can use.

Ammonification

Decomposers break down dead plants and animals and release ammonia.

Denitrification

Bacteria change nitrates back into a gas, which returns to the air.

Assimilation

Plants take in nitrates through their roots and use them to grow.

Nitrification

Bacteria in the soil change ammonia into nitrates.