

SUMMARY

Owing to the high humidity and the high temperatures in the tropics it is generally accepted that organic matter decomposes and disappears there rapidly. This is indeed true for organic matter lying on the soil surface as is proved by the thin or wholly lacking litter layers everywhere in the tropics. However it is quite a different question for organic matter in the soil even in arid regions. In a tropical soil many organic remains both from animals and from plants can be seen. Animal remains are e.g. arthropod skeletons (chitin), bones, eggs, faecal pellets, etc. Plant remains can be e.g. charcoal, pollen, spores, wood, roots, etc.

From this multitude only a few arbitrary pictures are given merely to warn for an often heard misunderstanding.