

LESSON 8

Clams, crayfish, snails, and mayflies are in trouble at pH 6. The eggs and larvae of aquatic creatures seem even more sensitive to low pH. Fewer eggs hatch, and fewer creatures grow to adults.

It's not easy for experts to measure acid rain's effects on terrestrial ecosystems. But it seems that too much acid in the soil may harm plants' root systems. Acid rain also seems to damage the leaves of sensitive trees.

Acid rain seems to change the soil, too. Acid releases certain chemicals (like aluminum) that normally stay locked up in the soil. These chemicals can poison some plants.

What Can We Do to Help?

Do you remember that when we burn fossil fuels, we generate the pollutants that form acid rain? The energy in fossil fuels heats, cools, and lights our homes. It also runs our vehicles, cooks our food, and runs our machinery. We aren't going to stop doing these things altogether. But we can each try to cut down. Every time we walk or bike instead of driving, or turn down the heat, or shut off extra lights, we help prevent pollution.