



## In defense of Squirrels

Squirrels are regularly the victim of bad press. However squirrels are beneficial to the ecosystem. When squirrels stockpile seeds and nuts for the winter they always bury more than they need. This results in new plant growth in the spring from the seeds that were not consumed over the winter.

Another interesting thing about squirrels is that they carry an important ingredient to the health of the forest. A living organism known as microriza develops and grows in the digestive tract of the squirrel. They are only found in squirrels. The microriza are spread as the squirrels deposit their feces throughout the forest. These microriza operate like nematodes in other plants helping plant growth. There is a symbiotic relationship formed and the trees and the microriza help one another to grow. Without the squirrels some trees could not exist.