Nitrogen Vocab

**Nitrogen**- an element in air and in protoplasm, makes up 78% of atmosphere

**Nitrogen cycle**- the circulation of nitrogen and its compounds by living organisms in nature; nitrogen in the air passes into the soil where it is changed to nitrates by bacteria.

**Amino Acids**- organic compounds that combine to form proteins that make up living matter

**Atmosphere**- the layers of gases that surround the earth; the air

**Nitrogen Fixing**- combining of nitrogen with other elements to form biologically useful compounds

**Legumes**- any part of the pea family which bears pods containing a number of seeds; can absorb nitrogen from the air and convert it into nitrates by means of bacteria present in nodules on the roots of plants

**Compound**- any substance consisting of two or more kinds of atoms chemically combined

**Nodules**- small swellings on the roots of plants that contain nitrogen-fixing bacteria

**Bacteria**- a large group of one-celled microscopic plants

**Denitrifying**- the process by which bacteria changes fixed nitrogen back to gaseous nitrogen, which is then released back into the atmosphere