

may be mutualistic. Free bacteria through the production of cellulolytic enzyme make available to millipedes otherwise unutilizable substrates, which would be of paramount importance to millipedes surviving in deserts, semi-arid zones where production of detritus is low. The millipedes in turn provide bacteria an environment with regulated moisture and temperature and supply bacteria with constant flow of substrates (cellulose, cellobiose and other cellulosic materials) to degrade. This type of association has important implications for nutrient cycling in semi-arid soils and would play a vital role in making semi-arid dry soils habitable for higher trophic levels.

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NEWS

COMPUTER PROGRAM FOR NUCLEAR CONTAINMENT

“The ultimate defense against the escape of radioactive material from today’s nuclear power plant is the bunker-like building that surrounds the key components of the reactor. . . . Researchers at the Massachusetts Inst. of Technology’s Energy Laboratory have developed a computer program that simulates flows and calculates local temperatures and pressures in the containment during both mild and severe accidents. By producing such detailed information, the program can help engineers design contain-

ment structures more accurately. In addition, the program can predict whether gases in the containment building will ignite when hydrogen is present, as it was during the accident at Three Mile Island.”

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