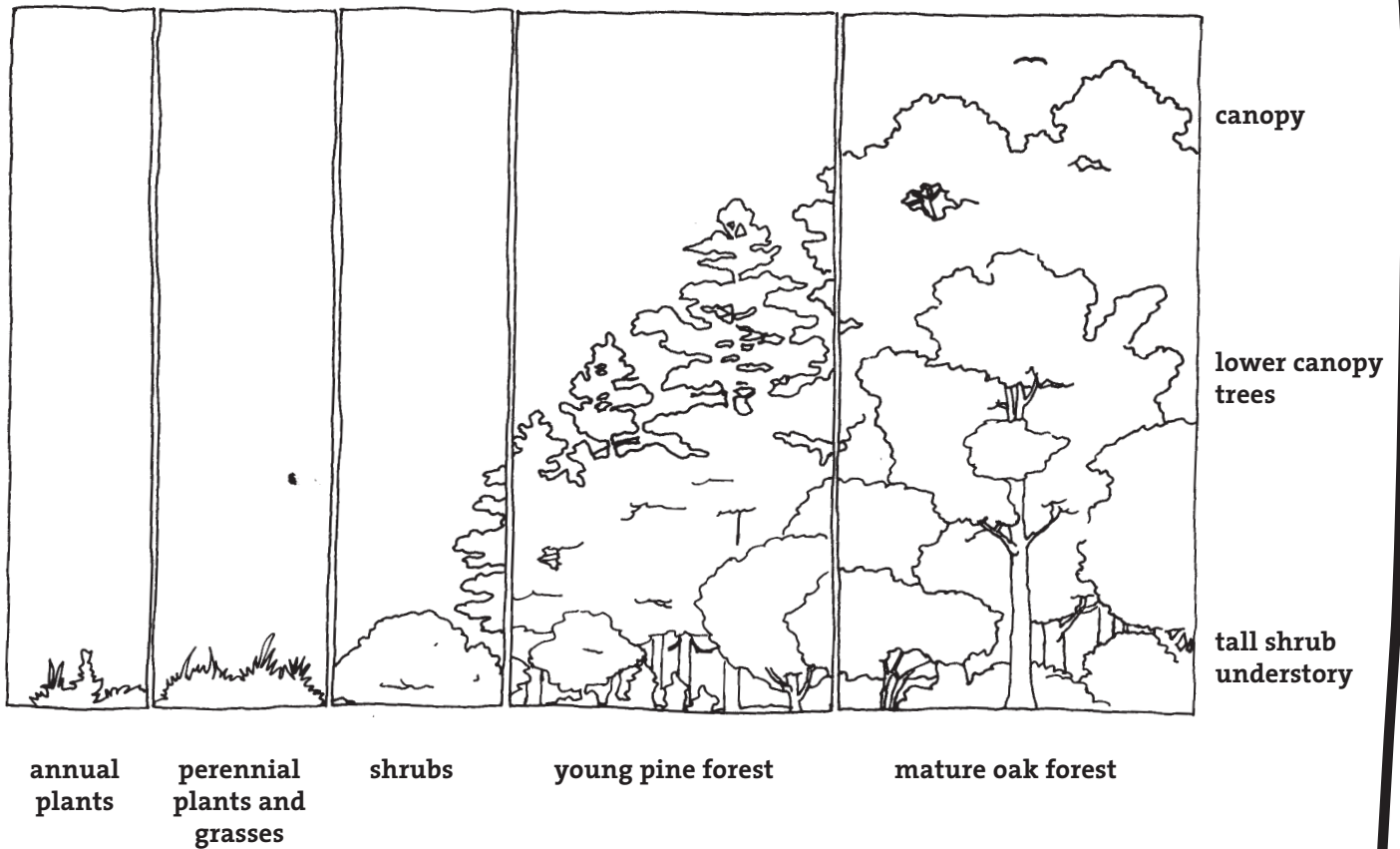


Picture of Succession



What would happen to the mature oak forest if a wildfire occurred? Would you expect to see a change in the plants that were growing in the forest ecosystem? As this diagram shows, plant communities change over time. No matter what the forest type, though, it's important to remember that succession is ongoing and cyclical in nature. Changes will still occur after the mature oak stage shown in the drawing. Disturbances, both major (such as hurricanes, wildfires, or prescribed fires) and minor (such as several trees dying due to disease or being thinned by a *silviculturist*) will bring different results to the landscape. Remember, all ecosystems change over time.