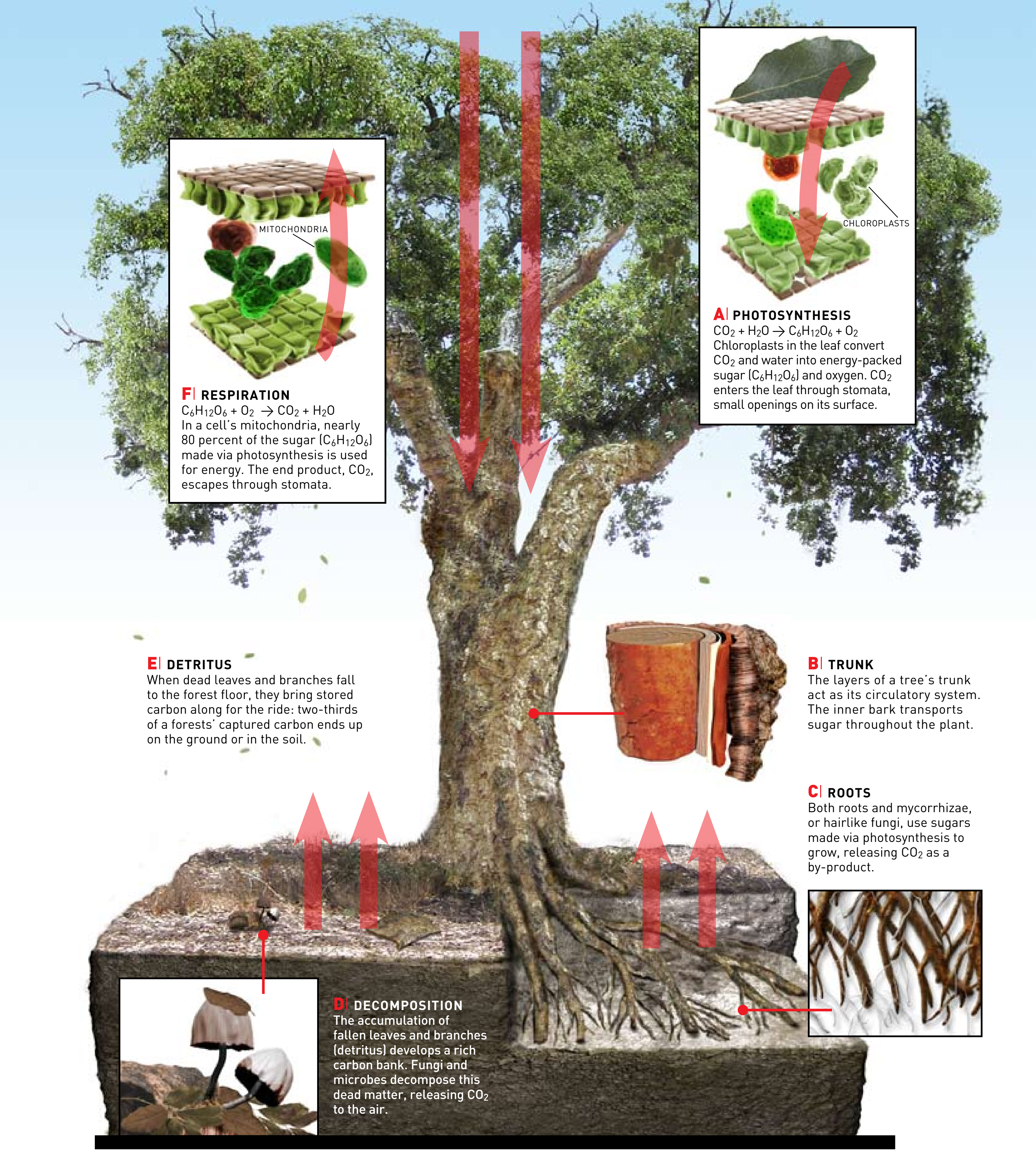

THE CARBON EXCHANGE

IN THE CARBON CYCLE, it's not just about the individual tree—the entire forest plays a role. Leaves take in carbon dioxide, converting it to sugar, which is carbon-based. Some of the sugar is used immediately for energy, converted back to CO_2, and released into the atmosphere. The rest is stored in living wood or dead matter, such as fallen leaves and branches. Old-growth forests, in particular, store vast amounts of carbon while continuing to absorb CO_2. —MOLLY WEBSTER

ILLUSTRATION BY MIEKE ROTH