

Name _____

The Rich World of Tropical Rain Forests

Use this worksheet to identify important facts for each category: climate, plants and animals, natural resources, and conservation.

Tropical rain forests grow near the equator. They are very humid and wet all year long. The average yearly rain fall is 80 to 120 inches (200 to 300 cm) and the average temperature during the day is 72°F (22°C).

This climate is ideal for growing large plants and trees. Some of the trees can be 115 feet (35 m) tall. These tall trees block some sunlight and help make different environments or layers in the rain forest. The tall trees leaves create the top layer, called the canopy. Below are smaller trees and shrubs. And finally the forest floor is where few plants grow because there is little sunlight.

Most animals of the tropical rain forest live in the canopy. Howler monkeys and sloths live in the trees eating fruits, leaves, and insects. Some insects of the rain forest include termites and leaf-cutter ants. These ants harvest nearly one-sixth of the forest's leaves, carrying leaf fragments from the tree to their underground colony.

Jaguars, snakes, tree frogs, and macaws are just a few of the hundreds of species that live in the rain forests. It is estimated that in the Amazon basin alone there are 500 mammals, 175 different lizards, 300 other reptiles, and one-third of the world's birds.

People have lived in the tropical rain forests for hundreds of thousands of years. The rain forest provides many resources for the indigenous people as well as people all over the world. Many of the things we use every day like fruits, vegetables, ingredients for medicines, and construction materials come from the rain forest.

However these natural resources are being threatened by removing lumber, oil, and gold at a rate too fast for the rain forest to keep producing. More than 50% of the original rain forests have already disappeared. If this continues, the world will lose these valuable forests forever. That is why there have been many efforts to save the rain forests.



Tropical rain forest