

World Rainforest Day 22nd of June

Today, Monday the 22nd of June is World Rainforest Day. It is a day when we celebrate the importance of rainforests in our lives and think about what we can do to protect them.

A rainforest is a very dense, warm and wet forest found on every continent in the world except Antarctica. It is called rainforest because it receives a high amount of rainfall every year, at least 250 centimetres (2.5 metres) and very often much more.

Rainforests are important to us for many reasons but perhaps the most important is that they contribute greatly to the **world's oxygen**. It is said that the Amazon rainforest produces **20% of the world's oxygen**.

Another interesting fact is that rainforests cover only **6 %of the Earth's** surface but yet they contain more than **half of the world's plant and animal species!**

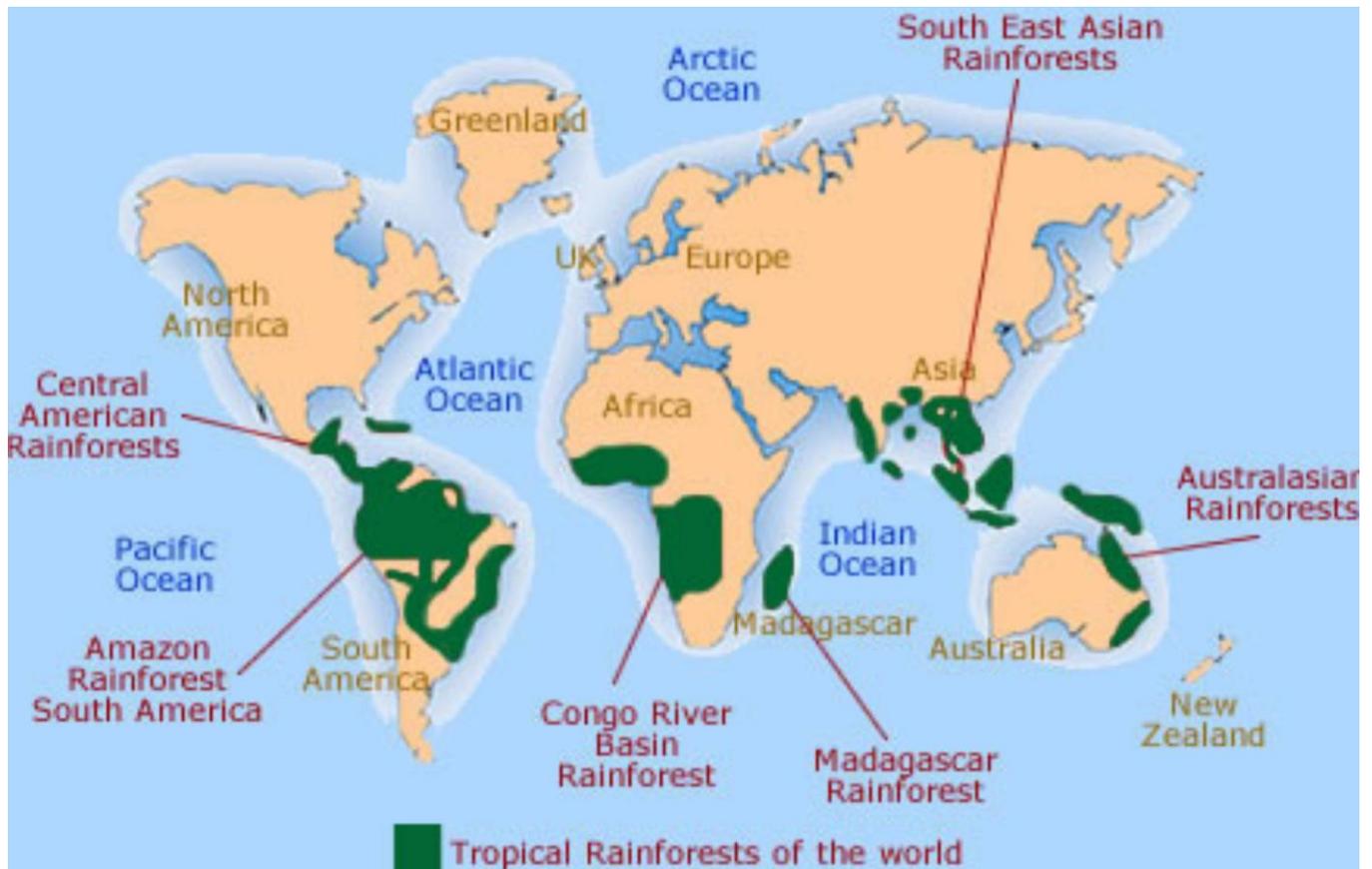
There are two types of Rainforest; Temperate Rainforests and Tropical Rainforests

For the moment we are going to look at the **Tropical Rainforests**

Tropical rainforests are found close to the equator where temperatures and rainfall are very high all year round. The equator is that invisible line that runs equal distant between the north and south poles



The major areas of tropical rainforests are in South East Asia, West Africa and South and Central America. Study the map of the world below and locate the tropical rainforests in green



Who and what lives in a Rainforest?

Did you know that there are about **50,000,000 tribal people** living in world's rainforests? These people depend on the forests for their food and shelter. As we cut more and more trees and destroy more and more of the forests, we are also killing people. Many native tribes have been exterminated already because their governments failed to protect them from logging companies, the mining companies and the slash and burn farmers.

As many as **30 million species of plants and animals** live in the tropical rainforests.

A typical four square mile patch of rainforest contains as many as **1,500 flowering plants, 750 species of trees, 400 species of birds and 150 species of butterflies.** That's a lot of wildlife!

There are four parts to the rainforest. It is like a four storey apartment block with various animals living on the different floors.

For example the ground floor (Forest Floor) is dark, damp, full of many dead leaves, twigs and dead plants. It is dark due to the trees above stopping the sunlight from entering the forest. It is estimated that only 2% of the sunlight reaches the floor. The trees are so packed together that it takes up to 10 minutes for the rain to fall to the forest floor!

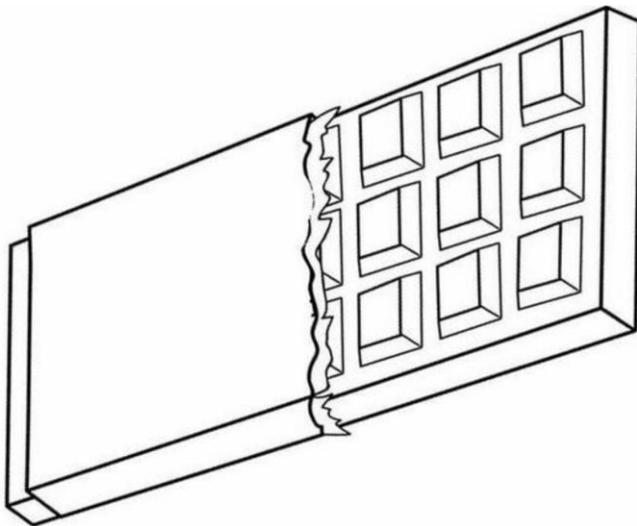
Insects, spiders and large mammals, such as the jaguar, tiger or wild boar live here.



Did you know that many of the things we have in our homes come from the rainforest?

These include:

- medicine
- chocolate - Chocolate is made from cocoa. Cocoa pods grow on trees in rainforests.
- sugar
- spices - includes ginger, allspice, pepper, cinnamon, coconut, vanilla, turmeric and paprika.
- rubber
- pineapples
- bamboo



Colour the pictures

Questions

1. What is a rainforest? _____

2. In which continent is the Amazon rainforest? _____
3. How much rain does a rainforest receive in a year? _____
4. What percentage of the earth's surface is covered by rainforest? _____
5. How many species of plants and animals live in tropical rainforests?

6. How many people live in the rainforests? _____
7. Name five household products that come from the rainforests?

8. Go to www.dublinczoo.ie and find out about some of the animals that live in the rainforest. Name the animal and where it is found in the world

Animal	Habitat

What's happening to the Rainforests?

More than half of Earth's rain forests have already been lost due our demand for wood and arable land. Rain forests that once grew over 14 percent of the land on Earth now cover only about 6 percent. If we continue to cut down the rainforests, they could disappear from the planet completely within the next hundred years.

The reasons man is cutting down rain forests are mainly economic.

- There is a huge demand for hardwood timber used in flooring, furniture and other items.
- Power plants and other industries cut and burn trees to make electricity.
- The paper industry turns huge areas of rain forest trees into pulp which is the basis for paper
- The cattle industry clears the forest for rearing cattle for the global meat market
- Agricultural interests, particularly the soya industry, clear forests for cropland.
- Small farmers slash-and-burn rain forest for firewood and to make room for crops and grazing lands.
- Mining operations clear forest to build roads and dig mines.
- Governments and industry clear-cut forests to make way for service and roads.
- Hydroelectric (making electricity using water) projects flood acres of rain forest.

Design a poster highlighting the importance of protecting the rainforests or showing the destruction of the rainforests using the information above