

# Rainforest

By XuFang Zou

When you see the word “rainforest”, what comes to mind? **Rainforest** has two words in it, rain and forest. Therefore, a rainforest has to do with a forest that has many rains, right? If this is what you thought, you were right! Rainforests are commonly located near the Equator. This means that they are warm and moist year-round.

The temperature in a rainforest rarely gets higher than 93°F (34°C) or drops below 68°F (20°C). The humidity is between 77% and 88%. An average of 50 to 260 inches (125 to 660 cm) of rain falls yearly.

The tropical rainforest has more kinds of trees than any other habitat in the world. There are three “layers” of tree growth in the rainforest. The tallest, or **emergent layer** trees, are usually 100 to 240 feet tall. In the middle layer, the **upper canopy**, trees are roughly 80 feet tall. In the **lower canopy**, trees are about 60 feet tall. The lower canopy is much denser than the other levels. This makes it the most humid because the plants hold so much moisture.

Many species of animals live in the rainforest. There are thousands of mammals, birds, butterflies, reptiles, termites, huge colonies of ants, mosquitoes, and other insects. Many live in the trees, but others live near, on, or under the ground.

The rainforest is one of the Earth’s most life-giving habitats. While rainforests cover less than 6% of Earth’s land surface, their plants and trees produce as much as 40% of Earth’s oxygen and almost 25% of all modern medicines come from rainforest plants.



Although the rainforest provides animals and humans with so many important resources, humans continue to destroy them. Rainforests are getting fewer and fewer, smaller and smaller, and disappearing at frightening rates. Over 30 million acres are destroyed every year. Man cuts down the trees from the rainforest to build houses, for fuel, and paper. I hope we can stop cutting down trees and ruining rainforests and begin preserving this natural habitat for our own good.

