

## Human Effects on Rainforests

Many of the products that we rely on everyday originally came from rainforests.

Foods like cashews, avocados, coffee, and mangos were all first discovered in these tropical forests.

Spices like vanilla, cinnamon and ginger also come from our rainforests.

The latex used to make rubber products is from the sap of the rubber tree which is also a native of the rainforest.

Hundreds of rainforest plants provide many vital anti-cancer drugs.

Some rainforest animals, like the colorful poison dart frog, contain chemicals that can be used to make useful medical therapies.

Tropical woods, such as teak and mahogany, are valued for their beauty and are used to make high-end furniture.

The clearing of land for wood, farming, and ranching is a major threat to the survival of these delicate jungle ecosystems.

The increasing worldwide demand for beef over the last decade has prompted the clearing of large areas of the Amazon rainforest in Brazil.

It is estimated that, by the year 2030, more than 25% of the Amazon rainforest will be treeless if this clearing trend continues.

Not only does this deforestation cause the demise of all plant and animal life in those areas, it decreases the Amazon's ability to recycle water.

When trees take in rainwater in the ground from their roots, the water travels up through their trunks and branches, nourishing their cells and participating in photosynthesis.

Much of the water that a tree takes in is lost through tiny pores on the leaves, escaping back into the atmosphere to condense into rain again.

This cycling of water is instrumental in maintaining the climate of the tropical regions of the Earth. Without it, the climate will become much drier.

Trees also act as massive stabilizers for soil. Without them, these areas experience erosion.

The easiest way to clear a rainforest is by burning it. This releases large amounts of carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas, into the atmosphere, and kills all organisms in its path.

---

## Human Effects on Rainforests

You might be asking what you can do to help conserve our Earth's rainforests. As a consumer, you have more power than you think!

When buying products made of wood, steer clear of tropical woods and choose faster-growing sources, like pine.

Reduce, reuse and recycle paper products whenever you can.

Avoid buying beef from countries that clear rainforests to raise cattle.

You can support tropical rainforests by visiting them in areas that provide well-managed tourism. These programs provide jobs, enrich the local economy, and conserve wildlife with national parks and sanctuaries.

It's difficult to recognize the effects of ecosystems that are thousands of miles away from your home and community.

But, the tropical rainforests on Earth are very much a part of our daily lives, from the air we breathe to the foods we eat.

Without them, our lives would not be the same.

---