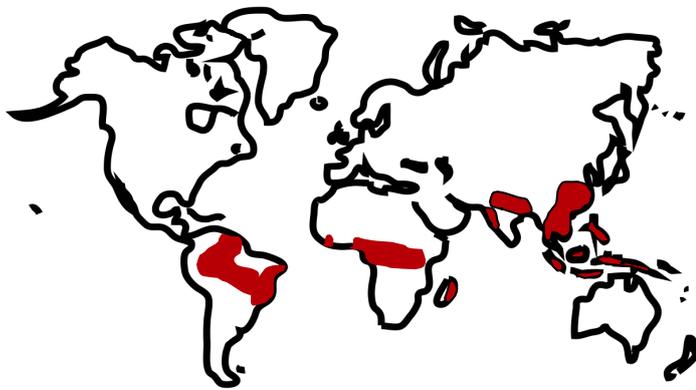


Definition:

A humid, dense forest which supports high levels of biodiversity.

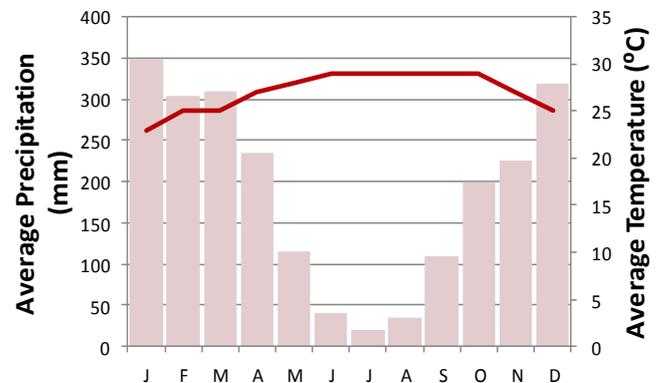
Location

- Tropical rainforests form a band around the Equator, lying between the Tropic of Cancer (23.5°N) and the Tropic of Capricorn (23.5°S).
- They cover six percent of the Earth's surface yet contain over fifty percent of all species.



Climate

- Tropical rainforests are characterised by constant high temperatures and high rainfall.
- High levels of humidity are also characteristic of a tropical rainforest.



(Flickr Source : Angelo Rossi)

A Toucan

Examples of Flora

- The tallest trees are called the emergent layer. They rise high above the rest of the forest, reaching heights of 60m such as Mahogany.
- Beneath this is the canopy and sub-canopy layers. The canopy is the most diverse layer of the rainforest and takes in 80% of the sunlight.
- Beneath this is the shrub layer containing plants such as the Peace Lily.

Examples of Fauna

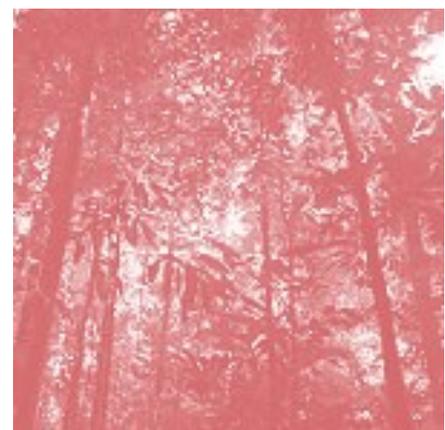
- The rainforest has extremely diverse fauna including Jaguars and Toucans.

Conservation

The rainforest contains over fifty percent of the world's species so it is important as a source of bio-diversity. Many forests, such as Amazonia in Brazil are suffering from deforestation, as trees are cut-down to make way for roads and to create plantations for cash crops such as coffee. This is reducing biodiversity and can decrease soil fertility and alter local weather patterns.

Conservation strategies include:

- Agro-forestry: growing crops and trees at the same time.
- Education: ensuring that everyone involved is aware of the negative impacts of deforestation. Protected areas can also be created.
- Afforestation: planting trees to replace those that have been cut-down.



(Flickr Source : Ben Britten)

A typical tropical rainforest under canopy.