

7th - Natural Vegetation & Wild Life



Natural Vegetation

The plants that grow naturally without any human interference and provide a green cover to our earth are called natural vegetation. The growth of natural vegetation depends on many factors like temperature, moisture, slope and thickness of soil. Nature vegetation can be classified into three broad categories-

(a) **Forest:** Grow where temperature and rainfall are plentiful to support a tree cover. Depending upon these factors, dense and open forests are grown.

(b) **Grasslands :** Grow in the region of moderate rain.

(c) **Shrubs:** Thorny Shrubs and Scrubs grow in the dry region

Forest: A closed formation of trees growing together at a particular place is called a forest. Forests are classified into six types-

Tropical Evergreen forests :These forests are also called tropical rainforests. These thick forests occur in the regions near the equator and close to the tropics. These regions are hot and receive heavy rainfall throughout the year. As there is no particular dry season, the trees do not shed their leaves altogether. This is the reason they called evergreen. Hardwood trees like rosewood, ebony, and mahogany are found here.

Animal life: A wide variety of wildlife is found in tropical evergreen forests, including reptiles like lizards, turtles, alligators, crocodiles and chameleons; different types of monkeys; apes like orangutans and gorillas; sloth; bats; squirrels; and many species of birds like parrots (macaws), humming birds, owl, etc. A variety of snakes like pythons, cobras are also found in these forests.

Tropical deciduous forests: Tropical deciduous are the monsoon forests found in the large part of India, northern Australia and in Central America. These regions experience seasonal changes. Trees shed their leaves in the dry season to conserve water. The hardwood trees found in these forests are Sal, teak, Neem and Shisham. Hardwood trees are extremely useful for making furniture, transport materials. Tigers, lion's elephants, langours and monkeys are the common animals of these regions.

Animal life: Tiger, leopards, lions, elephants, gaur, foxes, langurs, deer, a wide variety of reptiles and insects are found in these forests. Hornbills and woodpeckers are some of the birds found here.

Temperate evergreen forests: The temperate evergreen forests are located in the mid-latitudinal coastal region. They are found where rainfall is high , along the eastern margin of countries in the temperate regions of the world. They comprise both hard and soft wood trees like oak, pine, eucalyptus, etc.

Animal life: Rodents like beavers, mice, rats ,squirrels ,chipmunks are common here.

Temperate deciduous forests: Towards higher latitudes, there are more temperature deciduous forests. They are found in regions with moderate temperature and rainfall. When it gets cold in autumn, the trees shed their leaves and remain leafless throughout the winter. During the spring season, new leaves sprout and there is rapid growth of these trees during the summer season. They shed their leaves in the dry season. The common trees are oak, ash, beech, etc

Mediterranean vegetation: Most of the east and north east margins of the continents are covered by temperate evergreen and deciduous trees. The west and

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south west margins of the continents are different. They have Mediterranean vegetation. It is mostly found in the areas around the Mediterranean Sea in Europe, Africa and Asia. These regions are marked for hot dry summers and mild rainy winters. Citrus fruits such as oranges, figs, olives and grapes are commonly cultivated here.

Animal life: Squirrels, wood rats, deer, rabbits, foxes, lizards, snakes and leopards are found in Mediterranean forests around the world. Birds like kites, falcons and hawks are also found in these forests.

Coniferous forests: In the higher latitudes of northern hemisphere the spectacular coniferous forests are found. These are also called as taiga. These forests are also seen in the higher altitudes. They are tall, softwood evergreen trees. The woods of these trees are very useful for making pulp, which is used for manufacturing paper and newsprint. Chir, pine, cedar are the important variety of trees in these forests.

Grasslands: Grassland are found in regions of low rainfall. As the amount of rainfall decreases, the forests give way to grasslands. They are broadly classified into two types-

Tropical grasslands: These occur on either side of the equator and extend till the tropics. This vegetation grows in the areas of moderate to low amount of rainfall. The grass can grow very tall, about 3 to 4 meters in height. Savannah grasslands of Africa are of this type. Elephants, Zebras, giraffes, deer, leopards are common in tropical grasslands.

Temperate grasslands: These are found in the mid latitudinal zones are in the interior part of the continents. Usually, grass here is short and nutritious. These treeless plains are found between 40° and 55° latitudes in both the hemispheres. These regions are known as the word. The rainfall in these areas is not sufficient for the growth of trees, thus short grasses grow everywhere. The grass here is very healthy, green and nutritious. Wild buffaloes, bison, antelopes are common in the temperate region.

Shrubs: Shrubs are small bushy plants which can grow in extremely hot and cold areas. They do not require much water for survival, hence they can grow in hot and cold deserts.

Desert vegetation: Hot, dry deserts are found in the tropical and subtropical regions. These deserts have high temperature and extremely low rainfall, therefore, short thorny bushes are found here. Date palm, cactus and thorny bushes are commonly found in these regions.

Thorny Bushes: These are found in the dry desert like regions. Tropical deserts are located on the western margins of the continents. The vegetation cover is scarce here because of scanty rain and scorching heat.

Tundra Vegetation: If we reach the polar region we will find the place is extremely cold. The growth of natural vegetation is very limited here. Only mosses, lichens and very small shrubs are found here. It grows during the very short summer. This is called tundra type of vegetation. This vegetation is found in the polar areas of Europe, Asia and North America. The animals have thick fur and thick skin to protect themselves from the cold climatic conditions. Seal, walrus, musk-oxen, Arctic owl, Polar bear and snow foxes are some of the animals found here.

