

**Notice :** - This the third set of **Rest of Africa notes** sent.

- Make sure you are having the first two sets in your  
**new book of Rest of Africa**

- Remember to **attempt 20 objective questions every  
after 3 days from the Geography Objectives QB** sent earlier

## **VEGETATION IN AFRICA**

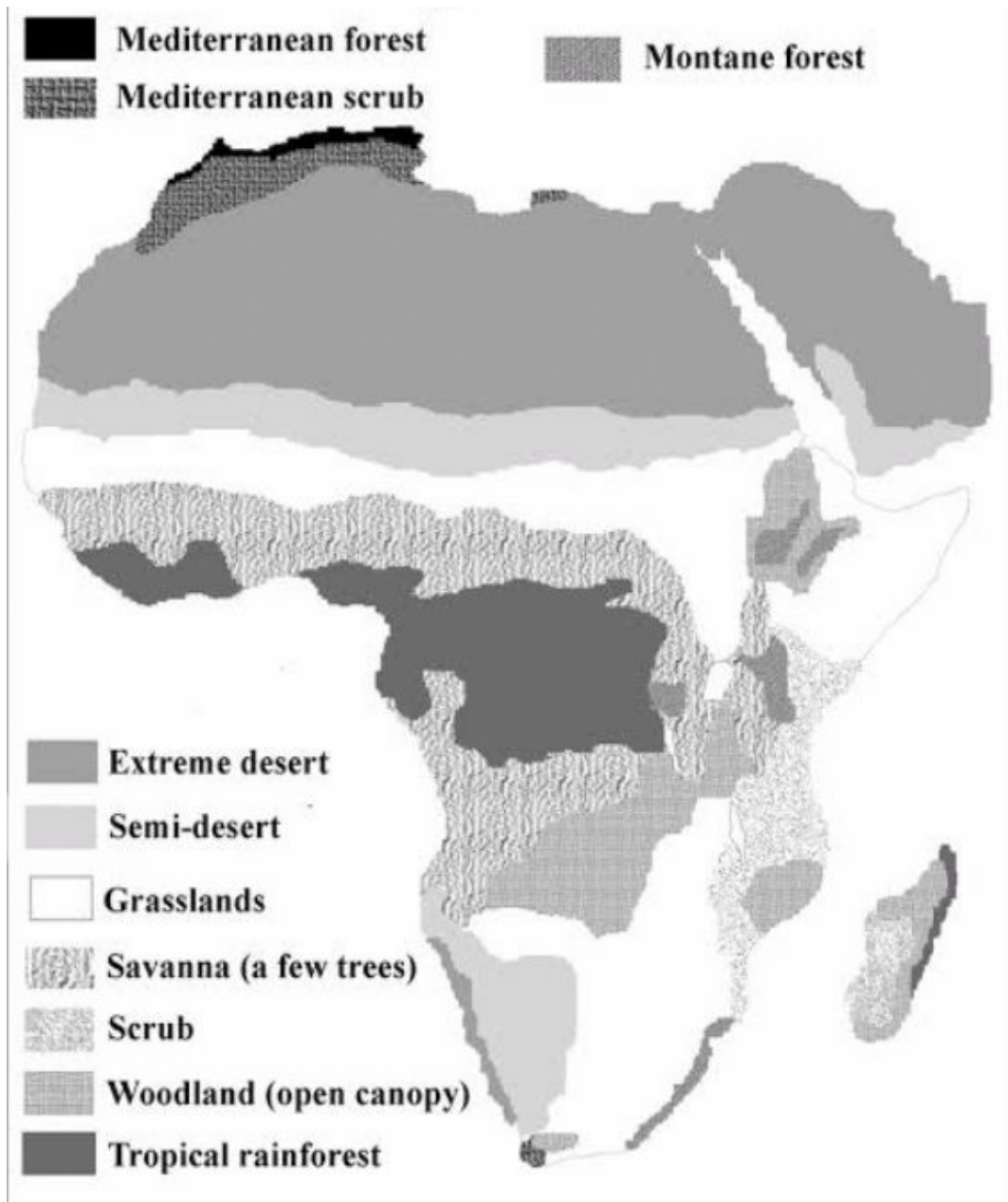
Vegetation is the natural plant cover in man's environment.

### **Vegetation types of Africa.**

Africa is blessed with a variety of vegetation cover. The major types include :

- Equatorial /tropical rainforests.
- Savanna grassland /woodland
- Mediterranean
- Mountain /montane
- Mangrove /swamp
- Temperate
- Desert vegetation.

## Sketch map showing vegetation distribution in Africa.



## **Factors determining vegetation distribution**

- 1) Altitude , height above sea level influences the growth of different vegetation types. Common in mountainous areas with savanna, tropical forests, bamboo, etc
- 2) Relief - The relatively flat land favors forests and grassland while the gently sloping land is covered with grassland and scattered trees.
- 3) Climate - areas with heavy rainfall favor tropical rainforests while areas with little rainfall favor desert desert vegetation having thickets and scanty trees.
- 4) Soil nature - areas with deep fertile soils support dense forests and evergreen grasses. Areas with thin infertile soils support very short trees and grasses.
- 5) Human influence - Man influences vegetation by either conserving natural vegetation planting man-made forests belts of pine trees and eucalyptus, reclaiming swamps, deforestation.

## **Types of vegetation with their characteristics**

### **1. Equatorial /Tropical rainforest**

This is dominant in West Africa in Gabon, Cameroon, DRC, Central African republic, Congo Brazaville.

The tree species found in these forests include : mahogany, ebony, okoume, mvule.

## **Characteristics**

- 1) Ever green due to the abundant rainfall received .
- 2) Have broad leaves for photosynthesis.
- 3) Have a great height of 30 to 50 metres.
- 4) Develop a straight posture due to competition for sunlight.
- 5) Do not occur in pure stand.
- 6) Have buttress roots due to big size and great height.
- 7) Have limited or no under growth due to limited sunlight for photosynthesis.
- 8) Have hard wood
- 9) Form a thick canopy of three layers.

## **Economic activities.**

- 1) Lumbering due to abundant flora.
- 2) Tourism due to abundant fauna and flora.
- 3) Hunting due to abundant fauna.
- 4) Agriculture at the borders of the forests.
- 5) Fruits and food gathering of wild fruits and tubers.
- 6) Academic research and study in zoology, botany, etc.
- 7) Wildlife conservation.
- 8) Forestry and forest conservation of extinct species.
- 9) Leisure and entertainment.

- 10) Fishing since they act as water catchment areas.
- 11) Bee keeping
- 12) Filming

## **2. Mediterranean vegetation**

This is located in the northern extreme of Africa in Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, South Africa.

Tree species found here include, pine, oaks, etc.

### **Characteristics**

- 1) Trees are scattered
- 2) Do not occur in a pure stand I.e, a mix of pine and oak.
- 3) Develop long roots.
- 4) Have a considerable height of above 15 metres.
- 5) Have little under growth
- 6) Have fleshy bulb roots for water storage.
- 7) Leaves are waxy and shiny to reduce water loss.

### **Economic activities**

- 1) Tourism due to the abundant fauna and flora.
- 2) Lumbering of pine trees.
- 3) Arable farming especially horticulture.
- 4) Animal husbandry of cattle, sheep, goats

- 5) Academic research and study.
- 6) Leisure and entertainment.
- 7) Sport hunting especially by the tourists.

### **3. Savannah vegetation**

This is very extensive from the western part of Senegal through central Cameroon and DRC to Eastern Africa.

It is sub-divided into :

**Savannah grassland** - dominating the Central, Eastern and Southern parts.

**Savannah woodland** - particularly in the northern part of Tanzania (miombo woodland). Tree species include, baobabs, cactus .

#### **Characteristics**

- 1) Trees are scattered
- 2) Have a relative height of 2 metres.
- 3) Do not occur in a pure stand.
- 4) Leaves are green during the rain season and turn yellow-brown in the dry season.
- 5) Dominated by grassland
- 6) Most trees shed off their leaves during the dry season to avoid water loss.

- 7) Trees are of hard wood.
- 8) Develop an umbrella shape as branches spread out with small stalks.

### **Economic activities**

- 1) Animal husbandry due to abundant grassland.
- 2) Crop cultivation due to the extensive relatively flat land.
- 3) Tourism due to abundant fauna and flora.
- 4) Wildlife conservation
- 5) Hunting due to abundant flora.
- 6) Academic research and study
- 7) Industrialization due to extensive land
- 8) Trade and commerce coupled with transportation.
- 9) Settlement.

## **4. Mountain /Montanne vegetation**

This is mainly found in mountainous areas where a change in altitude gives rise to different vegetation types at different levels above sea level.

### **Economic activities**

- 1) Tourism due to abundant fauna and flora.
- 2) Crop cultivation on the gentle slopes and foothills of mountains.
- 3) Animal husbandry on the foothills due to grassland.
- 4) Hunting due to abundant fauna.
- 5) Academic research and study
- 6) Fruit and food gathering in the forests.
- 7) Wildlife conservation
- 8) Forestry and forest conservation
- 9) Lumbering e.g. in the tropical forest zone.
- 10) Settlement at the foothills.

### **5. Desert vegetation**

This is wide spread in the northern part of Africa (Sahel region) and in the Southwest (Namib/Kalahari region)

Tree species include; cacti, coarse grass.

### **Characteristics**



- 1) Very short trees made of shrubs, thickets and thorny bushes
- 2) Have needle like leaves to reduce water loss.
- 3) Some trees develop thorns on their barks to reduce water loss.
- 4) Have waxy leaves to reflect sunlight and regulate transpiration.
- 5) Have thin stems with thick barks to reduce water loss.
- 6) Have very deep roots to access water from underground.

### **Economic activities**

- 1) Tourism in terms of sun bathing and desert travel.
- 2) Animal husbandry especially nomadic pastoralism.
- 3) Leisure and recreation like desert rallying
- 4) Mineral mining of oil, gold, etc.
- 5) Wildlife conservation of desert fauna like scorpions, snakes, tortoise.
- 6) Filming due to the bright environment i.e. the clear blue sky.
- 7) Agriculture especially irrigation farming in Egypt, Sudan, Senegal, in those areas that are located along major rivers, e.g the Nile in Sudan and Egypt, R. Senegal in Senegal.

## **6. Temperate / Veld**

This is found only in South Africa in the provinces of Natal, Trans Vaal and the Orange Free State. It comprises of grassland, flowers and shrubs.

## **Characteristics**

It shares the same same characteristics with the Savannah grassland.

## **Economic activities**

- 1) Crop cultivation e. g. Sugarcane and wheat in Natal.
- 2) Fruit and flower growing (horticulture and Viticulture)
- 3) Animal husbandry of merino sheep for wool and mutton.
- 4) Tourism due to abundant fauna and flora.
- 5) Industrialisation based on agriculture.

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