

# REMOTE SENSING

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# OVERVIEW

1. Remote sensing concepts
2. Resolution:
  - Spectral
  - Spatial
  - Temporal
3. Earth observation products

# MAPPING LANDSCAPES MANUALLY

## Pros

- Very fine level of detail

## Cons

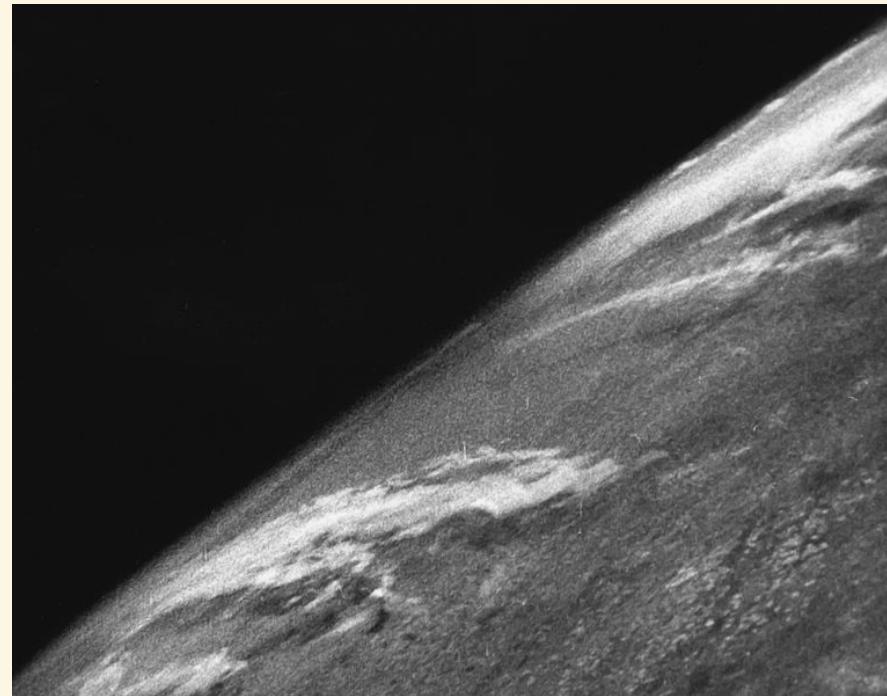
- Expensive
- Slow
- Inconsistency between locations and sampling periods

# MAPS FROM IMAGES

Aerial photography  
(1900s)



Satellite imagery  
(1950s)



# REMOTE SENSING

Remote sensors can be:

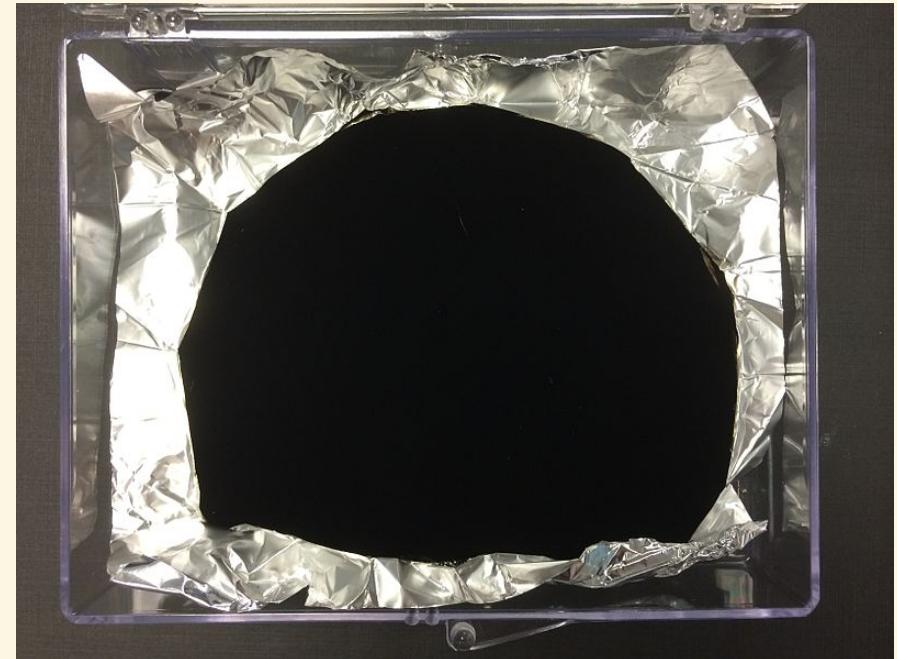
**Passive:** sense reflected solar radiation

**Active:** emit radiation and sense reflection

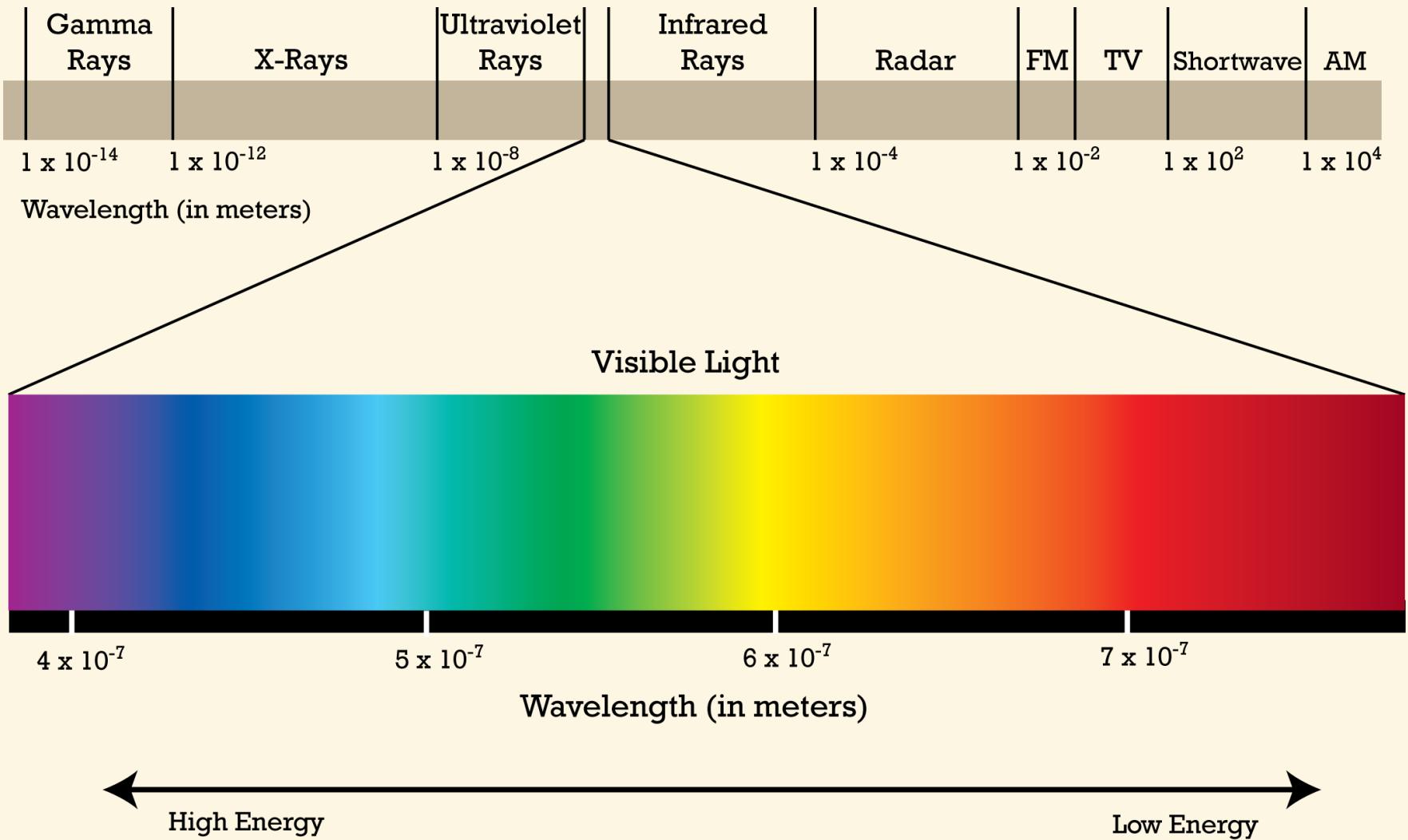
- LIDAR (light)
- RADAR (microwaves)
- Alteration in reflected light
- Trip time gives heights

# REFLECTANCE

**Albedo:** the proportion of radiation reflected from a surface, strongly affected by texture and angle of incidence.



# ELECTROMAGNETIC SPECTRUM



# REFLECTANCE

## Monochrome images

- Different objects have different albedo
- Construct maps by looking at contrast, texture and edges



# REFLECTANCE

## Multispectral images

- Albedo of surfaces vary with wavelength
- Compare bands recording reflectance in different wavelengths



# REFLECTANCE



# SATELLITE ORBITS

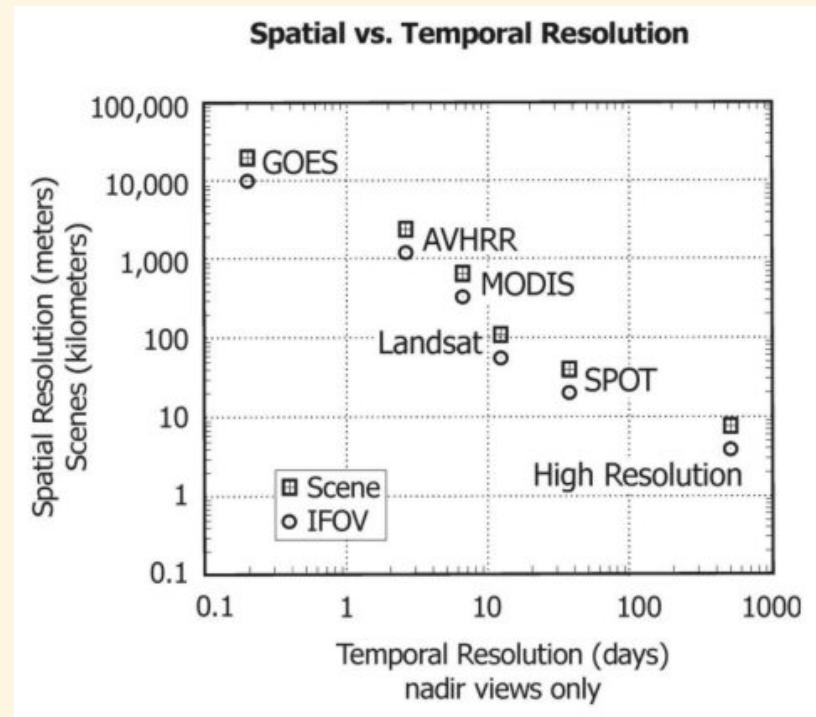
- **High earth**  
geostationary orbits  
(weather satellites),
- **Mid earth orbits**  
(navigation and  
communications)
- **Low earth orbits**  
(earth observation)
- **Sun synchronous orbit**  
(same time of day)



# SPATIOTEMPORAL RESOLUTION

## Low earth orbits:

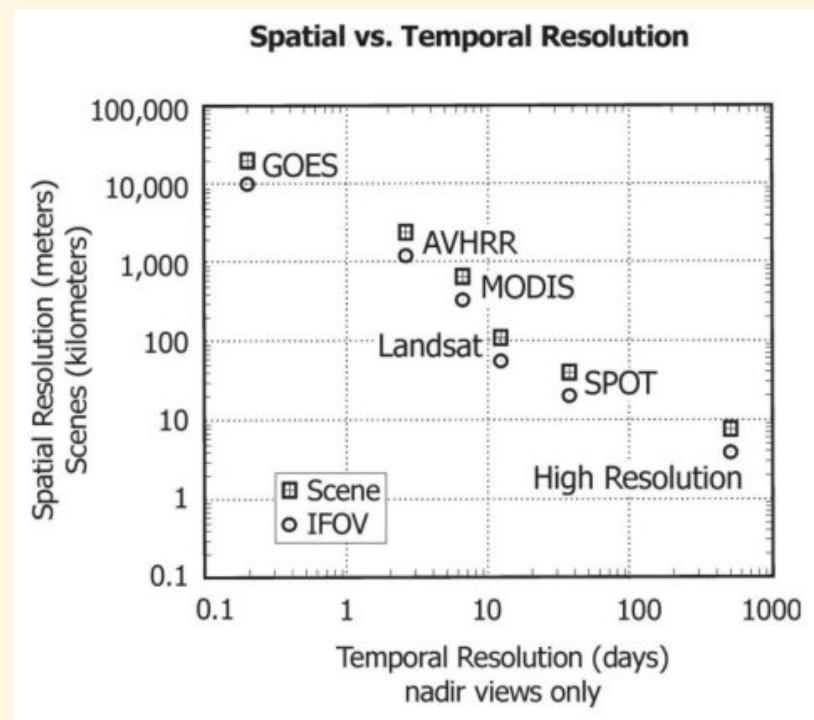
- Close to the planet
- High spatial resolution
- Narrow path widths
- Small scenes
- Less frequent images
- Use **constellations** of satellites



# SPATIOTEMPORAL RESOLUTION

## High earth orbits:

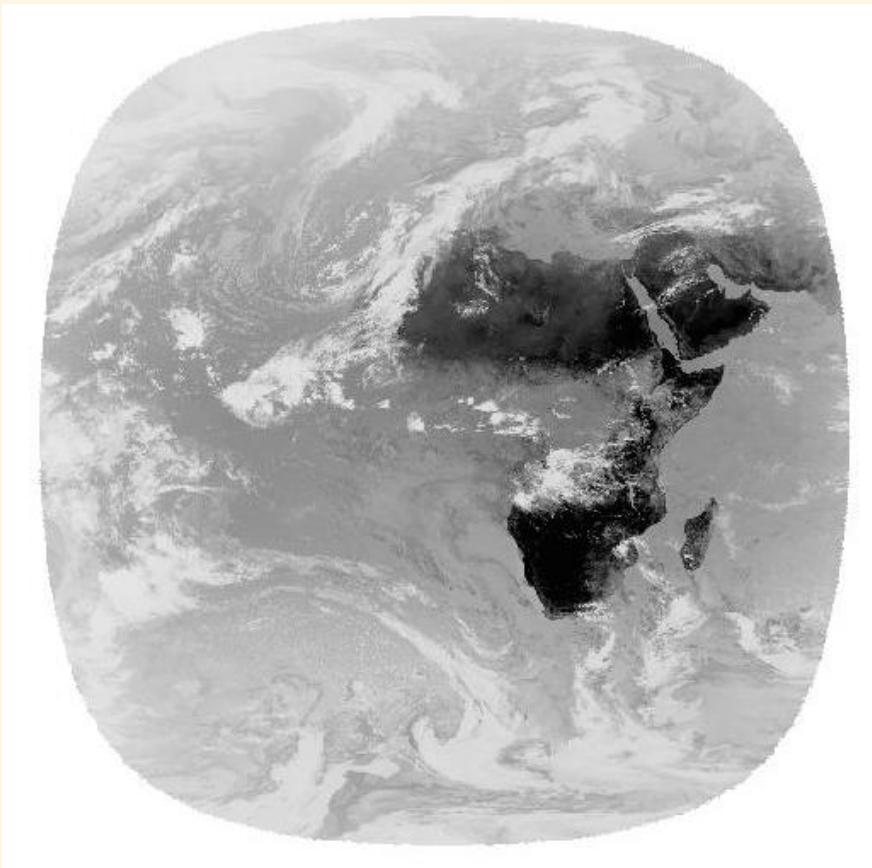
- Far out in space
- Low spatial resolution
- No path width
- Global scenes
- Can take images constantly



# SPATIOTEMPORAL RESOLUTION

To put it another way:

Meteosat

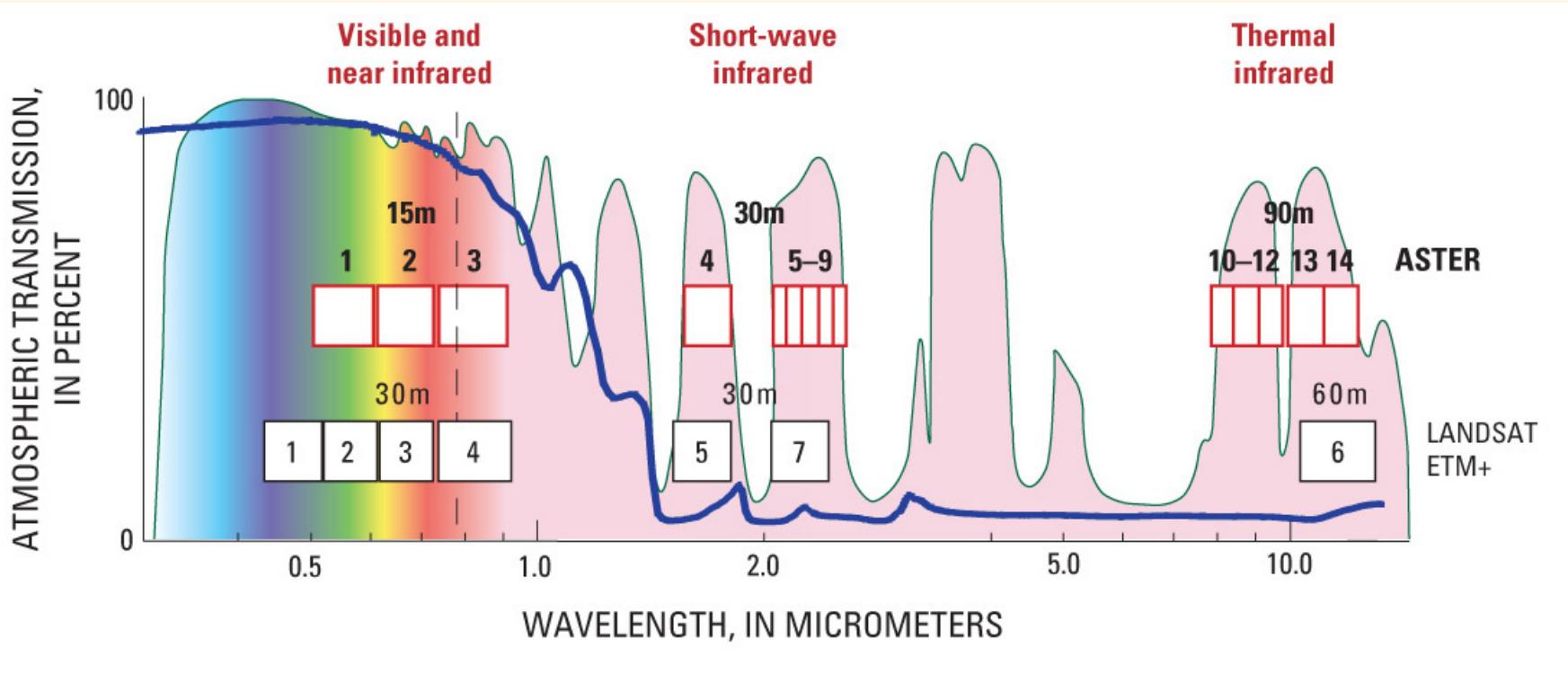


Pleiades



# SPECTRAL RESOLUTION

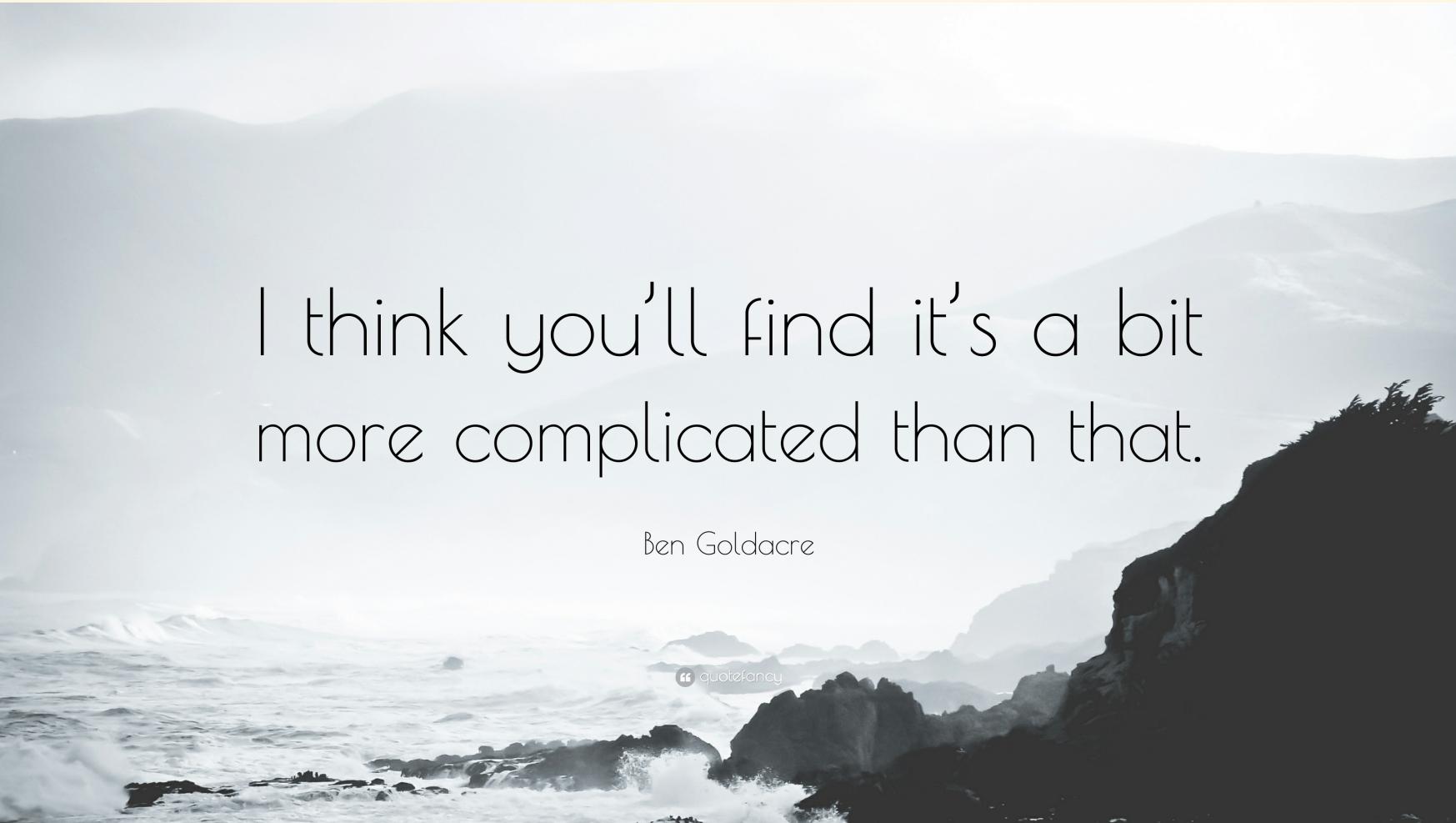
- Determined by the satellite mission
- Constrained by absorption of radiation by the atmosphere
- Light gathering sets resolution and band width



# EXAMPLE PLATFORMS

Satellite	N	Bands	Revisit	Resolution (m)
Pleiades	2	5	1	2 / 0.5
Rapid Eye	5	5	1	5
Spot 7	1	5	2-3	6 / 1.5
ASTER	1	14	16	90 / 30 / 15
Landsat 8	1	11	16	100 / 30 / 15
MODIS Terra	1	36	1 - 2	1000 / 500 / 250

# USING SATELLITE IMAGES



I think you'll find it's a bit  
more complicated than that.

Ben Goldacre

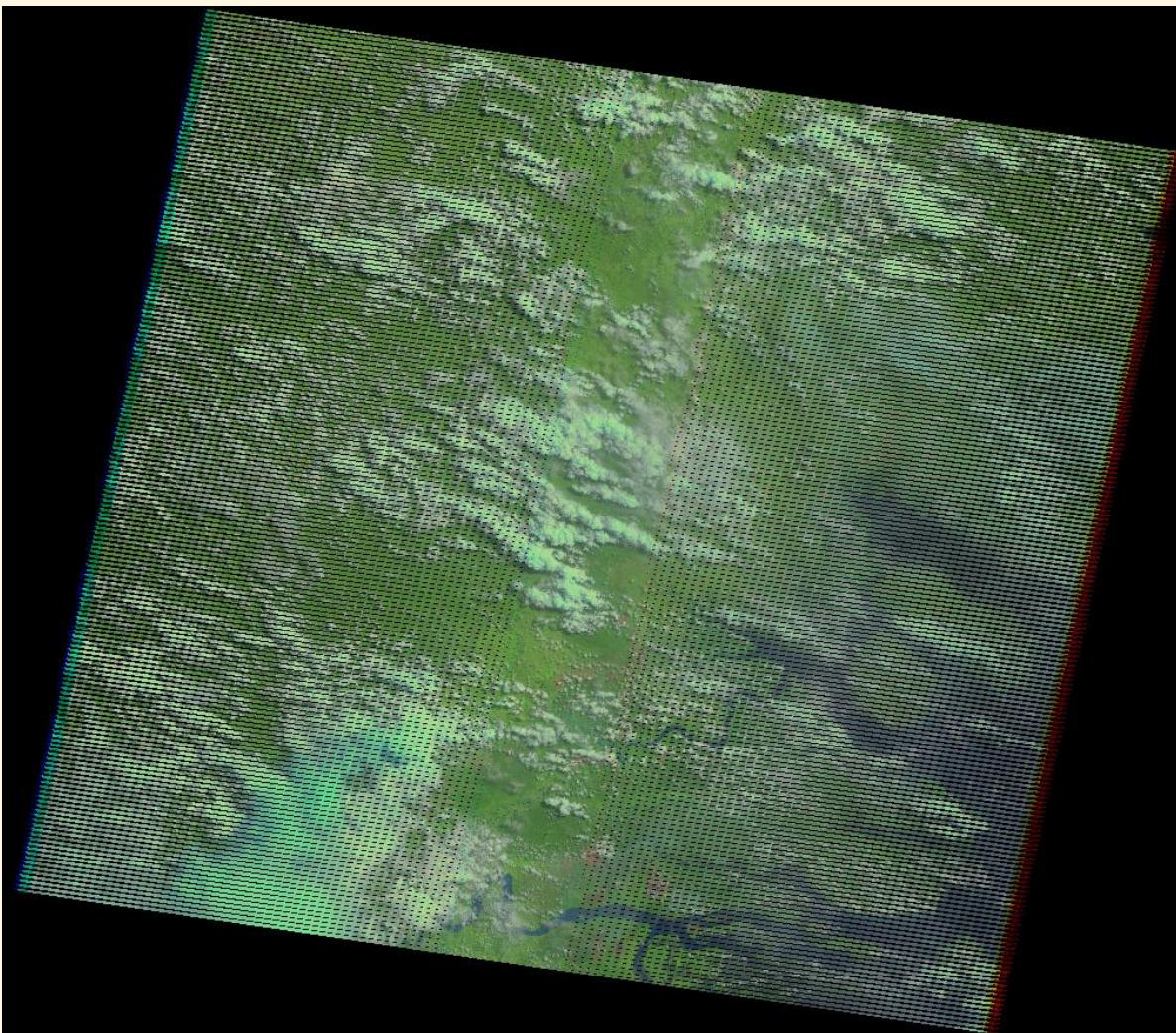
“ quotefancy”

# USING SATELLITE IMAGES

Multiple steps may be needed to use data:

- **Georeferencing:** where is the image?
- **Orthorectification:** remove perspective and terrain effects
- **Calibration:** convert the sensor value (an integer ) to an actual reflectance value
- **Atmospheric correction:** aerosols and water vapour can all impose spectral biases on reflected light and vary on a daily basis.

# USING SATELLITE IMAGES



# EARTH OBSERVATION PRODUCTS

Use satellite reflectance data to produce derived maps

- Use standardised algorithms
- Map land surface traits at global scale
- Temporal scales: daily to annual
- Resolution: 250 m to > 8 km spatial resolution
- Validation: many have pixel by pixel 'accuracy'

Four examples of increasing complexity

# VEGETATION INDICES

Simple direct calculation from sensor values:

- Normalized Difference Vegetation Index:

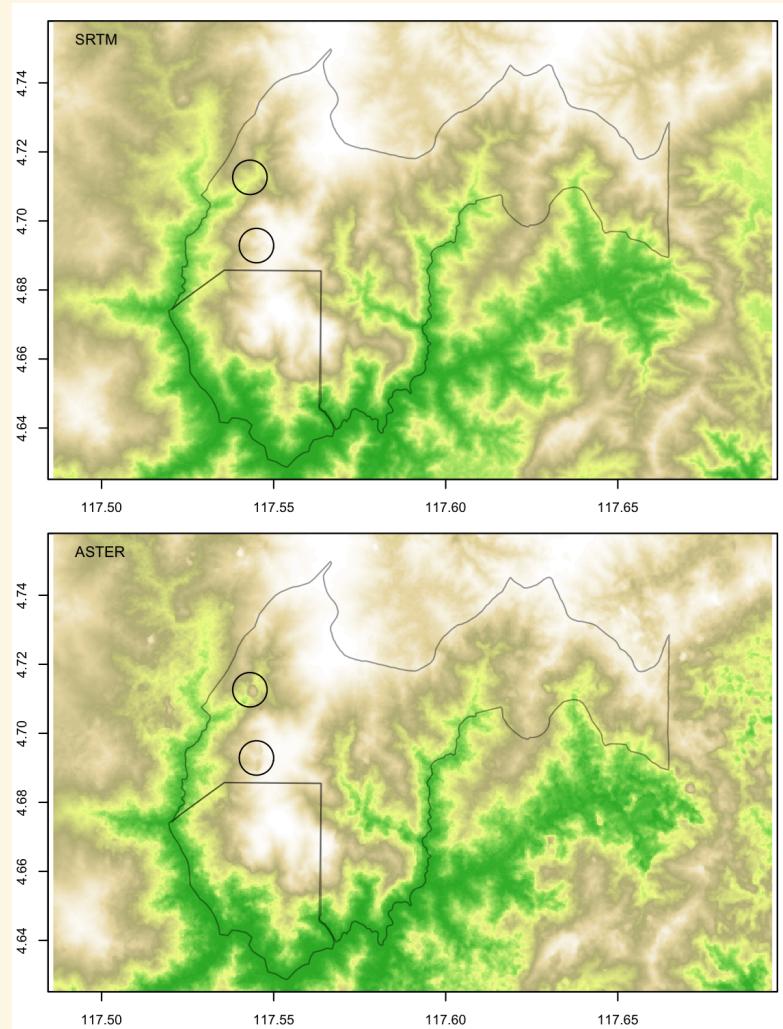
$$\text{NDVI} = \frac{(\text{NIR} - \text{RED})}{(\text{NIR} + \text{RED})}$$

- Enhanced Vegetation Index:

$$\text{EVI} = G \cdot \frac{(\text{NIR} - \text{RED})}{(\text{NIR} + C_1 \cdot \text{RED} - C_2 \cdot \text{Blue} + L)}$$

# DIGITAL ELEVATION MODELS

- Shuttle Radar Topography Mission (SRTM)
- ASTER Terra DEM (stereoscopy)
- Both near global with 30 metre resolution



# FIRE SIGNATURES

Live fires:

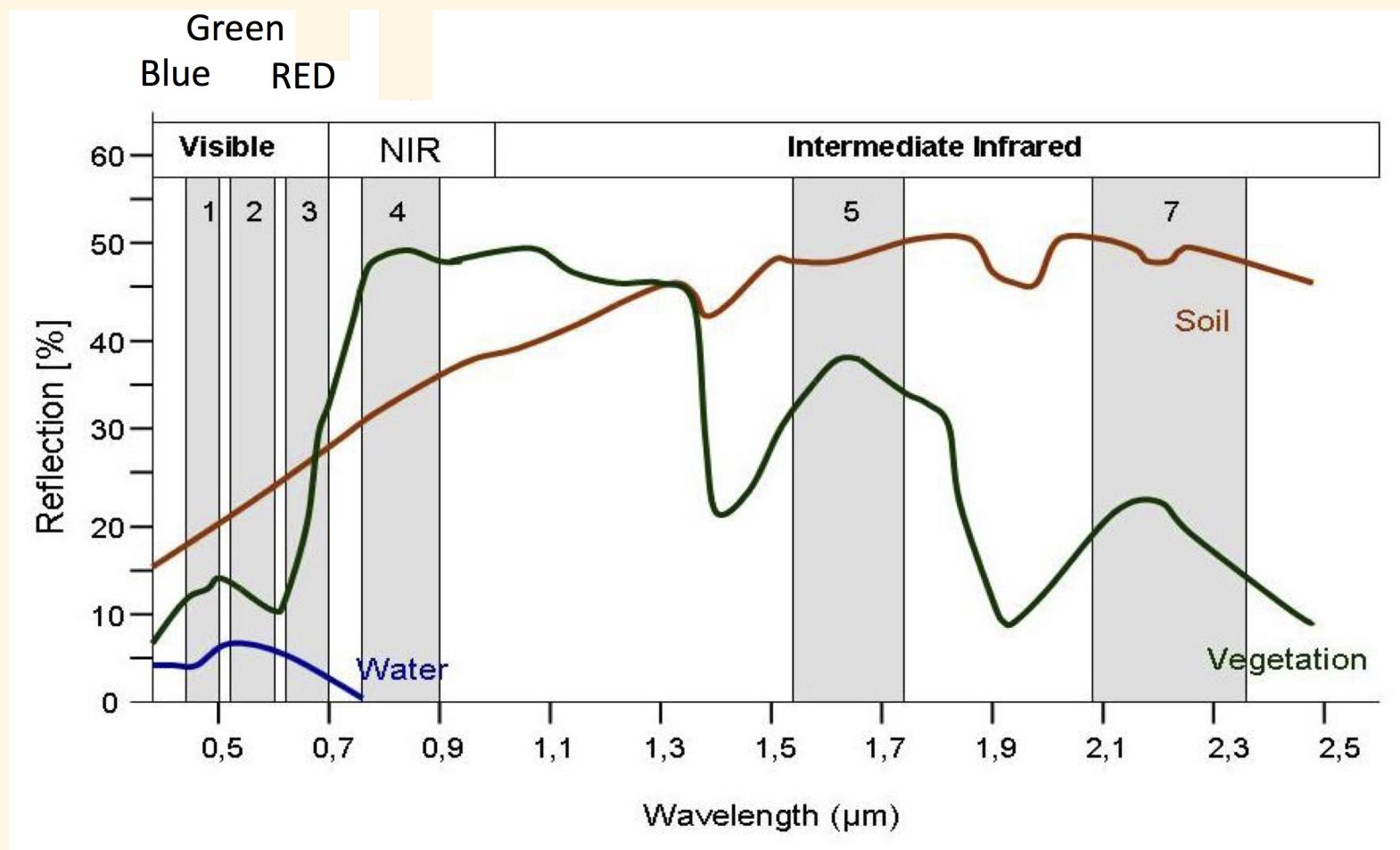
- Spectral signature in Infrared bands
- <http://fires.globalforestwatch.org/map>
- MODIS daily and 8 day fire observations at 1km resolution
- SPOT: annual fire frequencies (2000 - 2007)

Burned area:

- Change detection in successive images around fire pixels
- MODIS: monthly burned area in 500m pixels

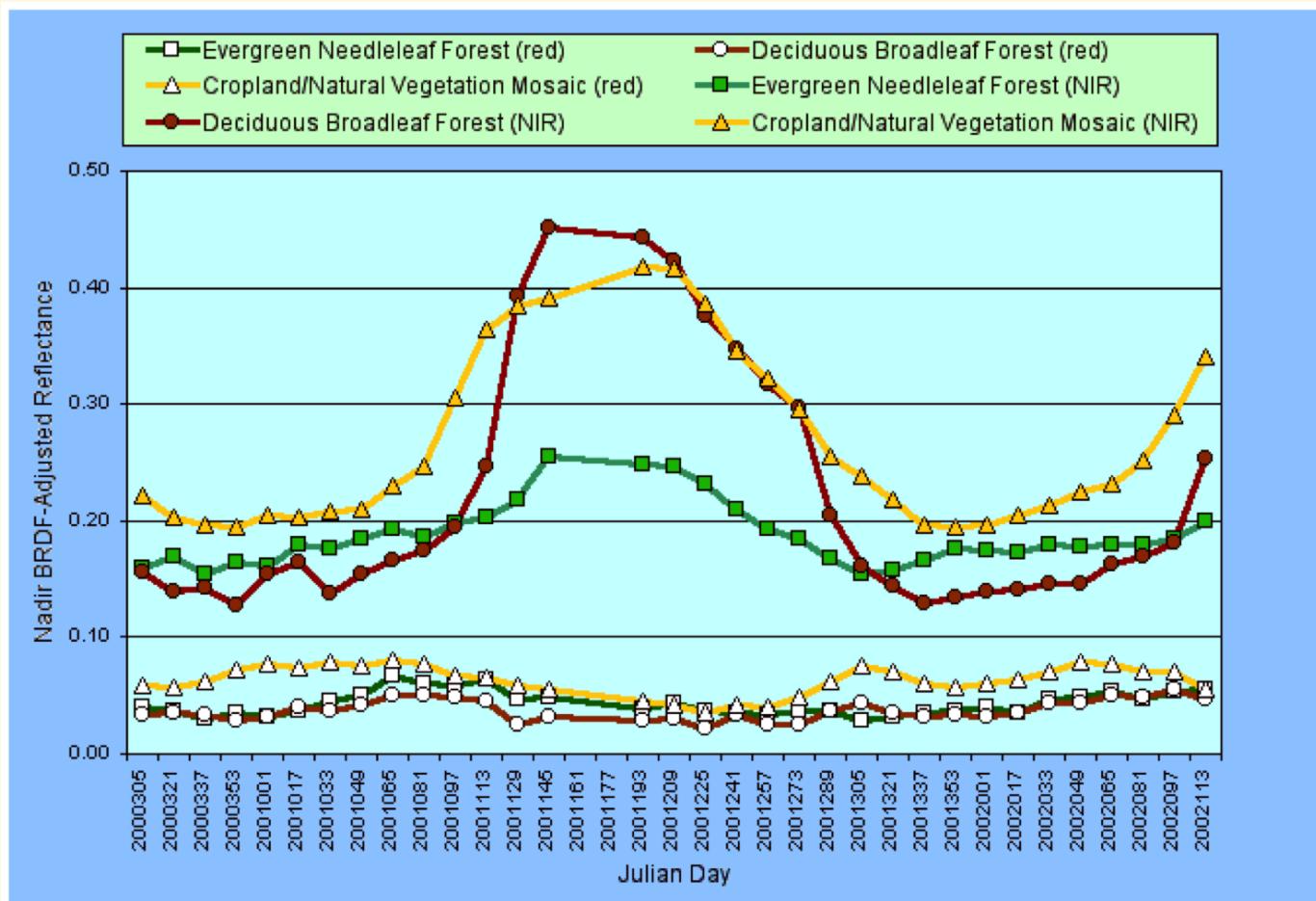
# LAND COVER

Spectral signatures differ between different surfaces:



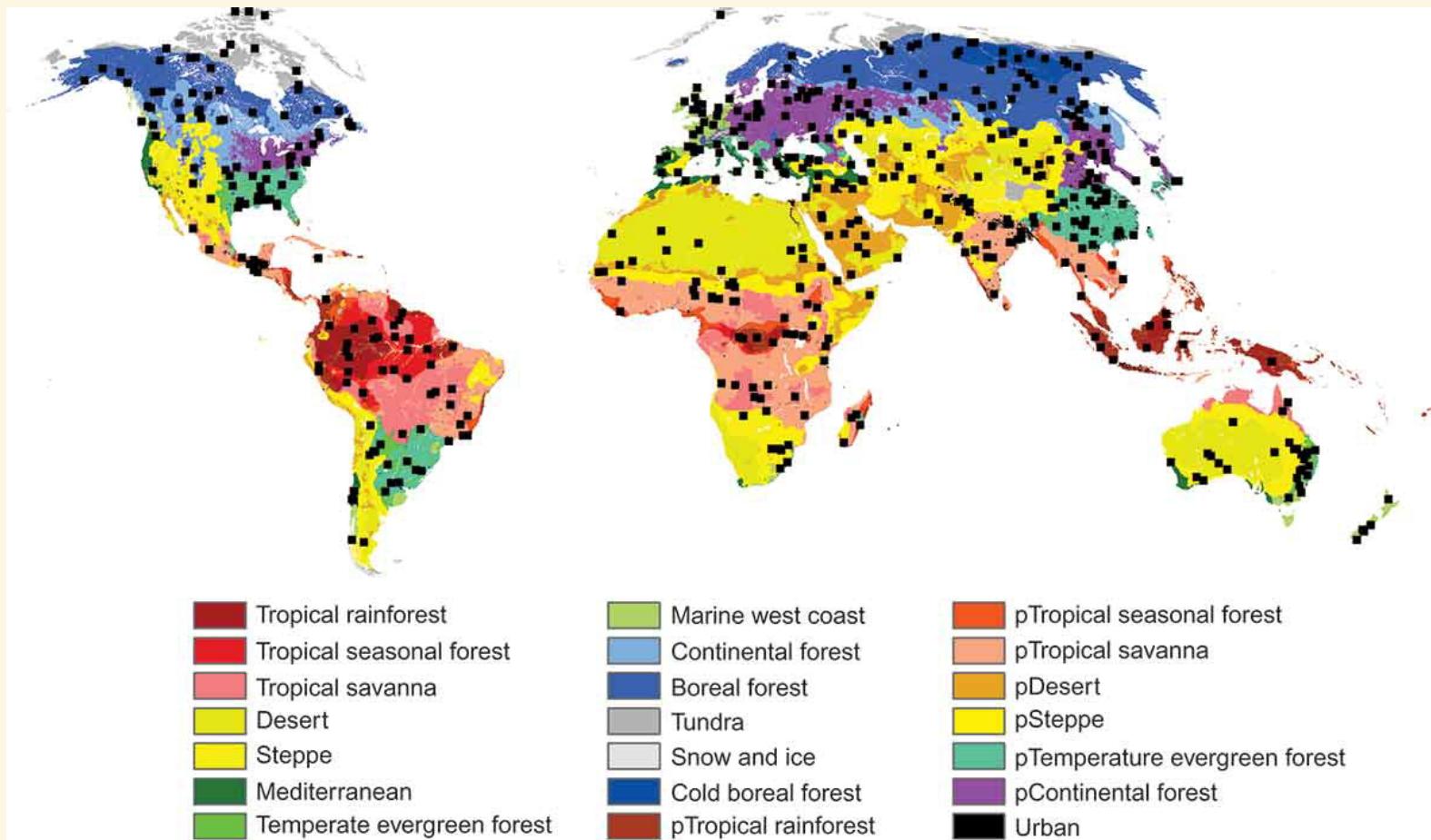
# LAND COVER

Spectral signatures differ over time:



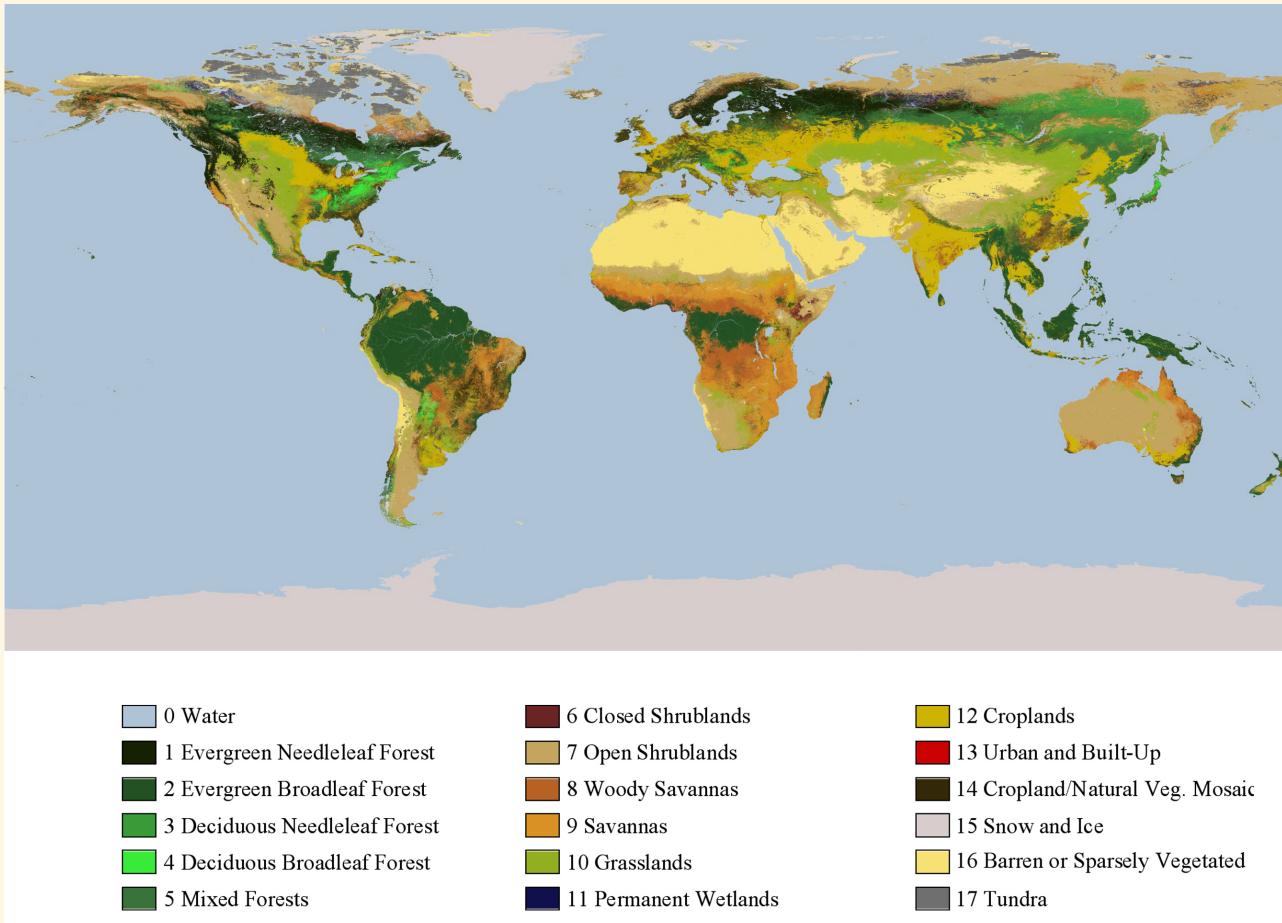
# LAND COVER

Ground sampling ties spectral signatures to habitats



# LAND COVER

Profiles can then be used to **classify** pixels to habitats



# LAND COVER

Examples:

- MODIS: Annual summaries at 500 metre resolution using five different classification schemes
- <http://landcover.org/data/>
- Global Forest Change

# PRODUCTIVITY

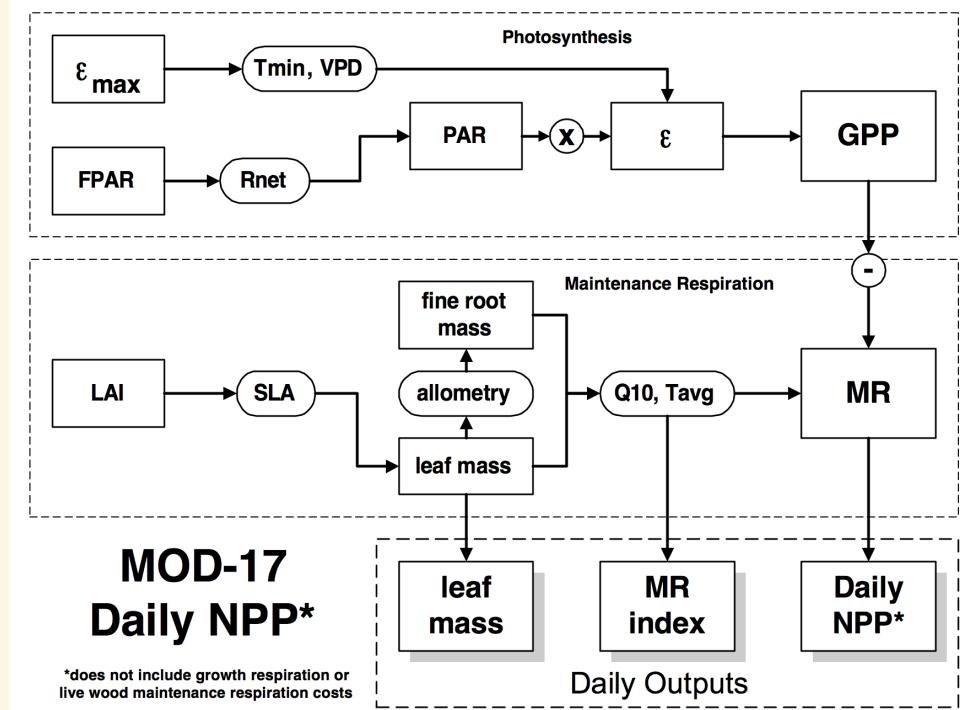
Plants use light to store carbon. If we know:

- The amount of **photosynthetically active light** absorbed
- The **radiation conversion efficiency**, given
  - the temperature and
  - humidity.
- Respiration costs.

Then we can predict gross and net primary productivity.

# PRODUCTIVITY

- Remotely sensed reflected light
- Ground measured incident light
- Biome models for conversion efficiency and respiration



# OBTAINING DATA

- <http://reverb.echo.nasa.gov/>
- <http://earthexplorer.usgs.gov/>
- <http://srtm.csi.cgiar.org/>
- <https://earth.esa.int/web/guest/eoli>