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## Tropical Forest Ecosystems Structure & Function

By V.P. Singh

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Tropical forests are vital for social, economic and ecological reasons. They play an important role in ecosystem processes [ such as the biogeochemical and hydrological cycle ] they provide habitat for wildlife and serve as source of biodiversity and they offer protection against soil erosion [Kremen et al., 2000 and Condit et al., 2002]. The forest contains large trees standing, 30 to 50 meters in height, creating continuous canopy of foliage. The enclosed canopy, shades tree forest floor, inhibiting the development of much undergrowth, creating an open forest formation. Piercing into the tree canopy, reveals a multistory appearance of broad leaf, evergreen vegetation. The forest is a treasure trove of different animal and plant species. Forest and woodlands cover nearly 40% of the earth's land surface and they are the most biologically diverse ecosystems in most part of the world. The tropics consist of a diversity, occurring between the latitudes of the tropic of Cancer and the tropics of Capricorn, north and south of the equator. These ecosystems are currently experiencing the highest rates of destruction in the world. More than 90% of dry forests have been destroyed and less than 2% of...



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