The Green Planet - Tropical Worlds

This documentary takes a fresh look at our planet through the eyes of the plants themselves, revealing a world of plants that is not known but is closely related to humans. The relationship between plants, animals and even humans in very different environments is presented in different chapters, this one on the rainforest.

Although rainforests cover only a small part of the Earth, they are home to more than half of the planet's known species of plants and animals. The seemingly quiet and peaceful world of the forest is a place of murder, where plants compete fiercely with each other for light.

When an ancient tree falls, the remains of its body are filled with different species of plants, from ferns to shrubs to real 'trees', each trying to make its own place in this newly born Eden. It took a year for a tree called Lightwood to win the battle for sunlight, thanks to its unique woody structure that reached a height unattainable by most plants.

Plants cannot grow without photosynthesis, which in our case releases the oxygen that humans and other animals need to breathe. But the leaves on which plants depend for their survival have attracted many natural enemies. One of the most powerful is a fungus called the white ring mushroom. Leaf-cutting ants provide the fungus with leaves and the fungus grows tiny mushrooms to feed the leaf-cutting ants. The tree, in turn, releases chemical toxins in defense, and the two develop in mutual restraint.

As adults, the plant's energy will be used mainly for reproduction, and different plants have different reproductive strategies. Light woods secrete nectar and honey bears enjoy pollination at the same time, a mutually beneficial strategy for plants and animals that is not always the case in the rainforest. There are plants that eat insects, and then there are parasitic plants.

Successful pollination is not enough for reproduction. There are also groups of seed-feeding animals living in the forest. Plants of the lobelia family produce seeds at the same time, overwhelming the seed-loving animals. Even the bloodsucker with its powerful defenses did not expect to poison itself one day.

Of course, there is another organism that is often overlooked in this vast rainforest, and that is fungi. Fungi are not just mushrooms as we think of them, they are just the substrates that fungi use to reproduce. In every cubic meter of rainforest, there are at least one billion spores floating in the air. Research has found that these spores play a central role in the ecology of the rainforest.

The rainforest is one of the most beautiful, colorful and dynamic ecosystems in the world. It owes its existence to the complex interconnections that exist in nature. As a result of human intervention, these connections are becoming increasingly fragile.

The lamplighter, a flower that lives for only seven hours. When it opens, a species of bat feeds on its nectar, spreading pollen for it as it feeds. However, the fact is that the nectar is so low in nutritional value that the bats have to consume large quantities of the flower to maintain their survival. As the forest area decreases, this bat will become extinct and subsequently the flower will also cease to exist.

In the future, it is up to us to seize the few remaining opportunities to help the rainforest to repair itself. If we are to preserve this precious resource for future generations, the world must work together to do so, and there is no other way. Only then will we be able to safeguard all life on this green planet.