

Why should I care about the Amazon Rainforest?

Visit <http://www.rainforestsos.org/book/> for more details.

Life-saving Drugs Although 25% of all modern medicines are derived from rainforest-based sources, less than 1% of rainforest plants have been studied. As much as 70% of the plants identified by the U.S. National Cancer Institute as useful in the treatment of cancer are found only in rainforests.

Biodiversity The rainforest provides habitat for over 50 % of the world's different plant and animal species. At the current rate of tropical forest loss, as much as 10 % of tropical rainforest species will be lost per decade.

Fresh Water One-fifth of the world's fresh water is found in the Amazon Basin. Rainforests are critical in maintaining the Earth's limited supply of drinking and fresh water.

Ethnodiversity An estimated 10 million natives were living in Amazonia about five hundred years ago. Today there are less than 200,000 indigenous peoples left in Amazonia and 90 fewer indigenous groups.

Source of Oxygen As much as 20% of Earth's oxygen is produced by the Amazon rainforest. Because its vegetation continuously uses carbon dioxide to create oxygen, it has been described as the "Lungs of our Planet."

Deforestation and CO2 Deforestation releases more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere than all of the cars, planes, ships, put together.