



## What do Rainforests have to do with us?

### Rainforest: A Biological Treasure



It is estimated that half of the world's 10 million species\* of plants, animals and insects live in the tropical\* rainforests. One hectare (2.47 acres) may contain over 750 types of trees and 1500 species of plants. Some 3000 fruits will be found there. Of these, only 200 are used in the Western World, however, indigenous\* peoples use over 2,000. About one quarter (1/4) of our medicines contain rainforest ingredients\* but less than 1% of tropical species have been tested by scientists. One of the most powerful anticancer\* drugs is extracted from a rainforest plant. An estimated 80% of our diet originated in tropical rainforests, including fruits like avocados, figs, oranges, lemons, grapefruit, bananas, pineapples, mangos and tomatoes and spices like black pepper, cayenne, cloves, cinnamon, vanilla and chocolate.

### Rainforests are disappearing!

Just as we are beginning to appreciate their true value and the importance of their role in producing oxygen for the world (an estimated 20% of global oxygen is produced in the Amazon Rainforest), we are at risk of losing most rainforests. Once covering 14% of the earth's land surface, they now cover a mere 6%. Experts estimate that we are losing 50,000 species a year, due to rainforest deforestation.\*



This is a picture of the rainforest canopy.

### What is happening to it?

Rainforests are being destroyed by those who choose to chop down trees to get money by selling them. Then they use the land for farming or ranching or for mining of oil, gold and other natural resources.\* Some big companies are still doing this!



### There are Better Alternatives

Although it is important to make money, experts agree that there is greater value in leaving the rainforest intact and harvesting its many nuts, fruits and plants sustainably, leaving the trees that have been growing for



what has probably been tens of millions of years! These rainforests cannot be replaced--and neither can the plant, insect or animal species that depend upon these forests for their survival.

### What can you do?



We lose 137 plant, animal and insect species every single day. This orangutan is also endangered. There are many things that you can do to help but start by learning how to reduce, reuse, and recycle and buy products that were produced "Sustainably."

### Kids Can Make A Difference!



### \* Word Definitions \*

- Species:** a distinct sort or type.
- Tropical:** very hot and humid, in the tropics.
- Indigenous:** originating in a region.
- Ingredients:** elements in a mixture.
- Anticancer:** Working against a cancer.
- Oxygen:** a gas that we need to breathe.
- Deforestation:** Cutting down of forests.
- Natural Resources:** wealth from the earth.
- Alternatives:** Other choices or options.
- Sustainably:** Keeping something as it was.
- Extinction:** Dying out as a whole species.

### Literary References

#### "The Great Kapok Tree"

#### Mini Quiz for Ghreen Members

(Put answers in Suggestion Box)

- Question 1:** Who is the hero of this story and what makes this character so unusual?
- Question 2:** Who is the book's author?
- Question 3:** Describe the two locations where this story was written? (Hint: you may need a parent to help you look this up!)

### About GHREEN

We are a group of Parents, Teachers and Students working to build a greater understanding of our environment and its needs.

#### To Join Us:

- 1) Read information posted on Bulletin
- 2) Sign up to join Ghreen
- 3) Attend some of our brief meetings!
- 3) Help do stuff to turn Hausner Ghreen!