



Products of the Rainforest

Audience

Activity is designed for 12 years old and up.

Goal

Students will learn about various products that comes from the rainforest and how we use those products in our everyday lives.

Objective

- To learn about the tropical rainforest.
- To identify different substances and ingredients in products that rainforests provide.

Conservation Message

Rainforests are often referred to as the lungs of the planet because they play a vital role in the uptake of greenhouse gases. Rainforests also house a huge diversity of animals and plants as they are one the most diverse ecosystems on earth.

Unfortunately, due to habitat destruction and global climate change rainforests are at risk of being gone forever. However, there are many conservation efforts taking place right here at the Tulsa Zoo to educate our community on what we can do to be environmentally responsible.

Background Information

Tropical rainforests have the largest biodiversity of plants and animals on the planet. Rainforests also provide vital services for the environment by absorbing carbon dioxide, stabilizing the climate and providing products that we use in our everyday lives. These products range from bananas to chocolate to palm oil and are used in cosmetics, food and medicines. Here are some common products that we use that are provided by rainforests.

Chicle: This is a milky latex substance commonly used in chewing gum that comes from sapodilla trees. Chicle is collected from trees then boiled until it reaches the appropriate thickness.

Coconut: Coconuts are the fruit of coconut palm trees. They are traditionally used for their water, milk, oil and meat. The palm leaves from a coconut tree can be used to weave baskets, or even in the construction of huts.

Coffee: Coffee beans are the seeds of berries from certain *Coffea* species. Once the berries are ripe, they are picked, and the seeds are separated from the berry and then roasted to varying degrees depending on the desired flavor.

Palm Oil: While palm oil is a controversial crop, some people are planting and harvesting it sustainably. Palm oil is used in a variety of foods and other materials such as cosmetics. Buying certified palm oil products ensures you are buying a product that has been sustainably produced and sourced.

Cashew Nut: The cashew tree is a tropical evergreen tree that can grow up to 46 feet tall! This tree produces the cashew nut as well as the cashew apple.

Banana: Bananas are grown in 135 countries and used primarily for their fruit. Some other uses that bananas have is the ability to make fibers and can be used as ornamental plants in homes.

Pineapple: Pineapples grow as a small shrub and in the wild are generally pollinated by hummingbirds. There are certain pineapple species that are pollinated at night by bats.

Chocolate: Cacao trees produce cacao beans and inside the beans are a seed that is fermented and roasted and then used to make chocolate. Once the beans have been roasted, they are referred to as cocoa beans.

Avocado: Avocados come from trees that can reach heights of up to 66 ft. They are also considered a single-seeded berry.

Materials Needed

- Rainforest Product Checklist (provided)
- Pen or Pencil

Length of Activity

30 minutes

Procedure

- Print off the Rainforest Product Checklist.
- See if you can find any of the items on the checklist in or around your home.
- Check off each product as you find it.



Helpful Hint: Don't forget that some items may not be where you think. For example, palm oil could be in lipsticks, cooking oils, or even shampoos or soap. Coconuts can be canned, fresh or dried.



Rainforest Products Checklist



Chicle/Chewing Gum



Coconut



Coffee



Palm Oil



Cashew



Banana



Pineapple



Cocoa/Chocolate



Avocado