

AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE

TOPIC _____ FOREST AND ITS PRODUCTS

CLASS _____ JSS 2

WEEK _____ 5

FOREST: A Forest is an area of land covered with trees, grasses, bushes as well as forage plants. Forest are said to be natural when they grow wild, they may also be planted by man artificially.

It can also be described as a complex ecological system dominated by trees, grasses, and other living organisms. In the forest lands, timber, perennial and special trees crops, as well as animals protein sources, are provided and from important forest resources.

TYPES OF FOREST

Forest can be classified into Mangrove swamp forest, tropical rainforest and Derived forests.

(1) **MANGROVE SWAMP FOREST:** These types of forest are swampy and found in the coastal areas of Nigeria and the Atlantic oceans in the south south zones, including the tidal estuaries of river around the lagoons. The plants here are herbaceous, with the presence of occasional creeping plants. The mangrove forest is not too important as main sources of forest product like timber and other species tall straight trees.

(2) **TROPICAL RAIN FOREST:** These are characterized by many trees. The tropical rainfall is mostly evergreen and exists in area with high annual rainfall range. The annual temperature is high with little variation and important sources of valuable forest product, particularly timber and other tall trees species.

(3) **DERIVED FOREST:** These are characterized by the presence of scanty or few trees. They are regarded to as savanna woodland. The savanna consists of short trees, herbaceous plants and grasses. This type of forest is vulnerable to bush fire; it is useful rangeland for grazing ruminant animals. The derived forest is referred to a savanna grassland because it is dominated by grasses. It is characterized by temperature, low annual rainfall, low humidity and prolonged dry period.

FOREST RESOURCES

The benefits or resources from the forest include; trees, wildlife, fruits, herbs and shelter.

(1) **Trees:** Big trees like iroko, mahogany, sapele etc. are important forest resources that provide timber and numerous other timber products.

(2) **Wildlife:** This provides animal's products and protein nutrients as well as game animals and tourism potentials. They provide hides and skins, horn, ivory, bones etc.

(3) **Fruits:** Fruits rich in vitamins and minerals are provided in the forest as well as vegetable products.

(4) Useful Herbs: Some useful medicine and other herbs are available in the forest, examples Shea butter, wax, gum Arabic, dyes etc.

(5) Shelter: Materials for building construction are provided in the forest, thatching materials etc. Trees canopies in the forests, provides shelter for animals in the forests.

USES OF FOREST RESOURCES

The following are the uses and benefits of the forest resources:

(1) Provision of timber: Some timber is exported as logs, but a large proportion is sawn into plants for construction of furniture's, housing, plywood, and other timber products.

(2) Electric poles and railways sleepers can be gotten from the forest trees.

(3) Source of income: it provides income to individuals and the government from the various timber and other products.

(4) A large amount of fibres, latex, gum, resins, oils and numerous plant products are obtained from the forests.

(5) Source of medicinal herbs: many drugs used in the treatment of disease are obtained from herbs, trees, and roots.

(6) Soil protection and erosion control: the forest cover, protect the soil from erosion.

(7) Provision of raw materials: industrial raw materials are supplied from forest produces examples hides and skin also wood pulp from timber is used for paper production etc.

(8) Employment opportunities: Forest guards are employed for the protection of the forest resources. People are hired to harvest and process harvested products.

(9) Fuel: Forest provides domestic fuel for cooking in the form of firewood.

(10) Grazing Area: The forest provides grazing area for grazing animals like cow, sheep, goat etc.

HUMAN ACTIVITIES THAT AFFECTS THE FORESTS

(1) Deforestation: This is deliberate and uncontrolled removal or clean felling of the forest trees.

(2) Hunting: Indiscriminate hunting or poaching of animals in the forest may destabilize the natural balance in the ecosystem.

(3) Farming Activities: The natural forest is often cut down for farming activities. in the zones where the forest is regularly cleared. Farm abandoned, succession takes places and the area degrades.

(4) Bush Burning: The practice tends to destroy the organic content of the soil which is disadvantageous. The vegetation is eliminated and only some handy trees may withstand this, and animals grazing area is affected.