

Top 7 Types of Forests Found in India

Article Shared by **Aparna Shah**

This article throws light upon the top seven types of forests found in India. The types are: 1. Evergreen Forests 2. Dry Deciduous Forests 3. Humid Deciduous Forests 4. Scrub and Thorn Forests 5. Desert Vegetation 6. Himalayan Vegetation 7. Tidal or Mangrove Forests.

Forest Type # 1. Evergreen Forests:

(a) Location:

Evergreen forests are found in the Terai region of eastern Himalayas, the western slope of the Western Ghats and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

(b) Characteristics:

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Evergreen forest are found in areas where the average annual rainfall exceeds 200 cms. Due to abundant rainfall, the soil is never deficient in moisture. Therefore the trees never lose their leaves. The leaves also remain green throughout the year.

(c) Species:

The common trees are Rosewood, Toon, Poan, Rubber, Sissoo, Goran, Mahogany, Bamboo etc.

Forest Type # 2. Dry Deciduous Forests:

(a) Location:

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Dry deciduous forests are found in western Bihar, eastern Uttar Pradesh, eastern Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and other arid regions in the Deccan plateau.

(b) Characteristics:

These forests are prevalent in warm, arid regions, where the annual average rainfall ranges between 50 and 100 cms. The temperature

also remains high throughout the year, and evaporation of water from the soil and vegetation is rapid.

(c) Species:

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The important trees found are Teak, Sal, Tendu, Palas, Rosewood, Satinwood, Amaltas, Bel, Lendi etc.

Forest Type # 3. Humid Deciduous Forests:

(a) Location:

These forests are also known as Monsoon Forests, since the vegetation is largely influenced by the Monsoon climate of the subcontinent. Humid Deciduous Forests are found in the eastern slope of the Western Ghats, the plains, plateau and coast of West Bengal, the plateau and Gangetic plains of Bihar, and the plains of Assam.

(b) Characteristics:

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These forests are common in regions where the annual average temperature varies between 100 and 200 cms. The climate here is characterised by hot, humid summers and dry winters. The trees shed their leaves during the cold season. The trees are well-adapted to combat the dry winter season. They are conservative water users and hence shed their leaves in time to reduce transpiration loss. Hence they are known as deciduous trees.

(c) Species:

The commonly found trees are Mango, Neem, Shimul, Mahuya, Shirish, Sal, Teak, Arjun, Jarul, Amla, Tamun, Kusum, Kanju, Palas etc.

Forest Type # 4. Scrub and Thorn Forests:

(a) Location:

Scrub and thorn vegetation cover the extremely arid regions of western Rajasthan, Kutch and Kathiawar areas of Gujarat and the rain-shadow areas of the southern plateau.

(b) Characteristics:

This type of vegetation is found in regions marked by very scanty rainfall, ranging between 25 and 50 cms annually. This acute scarcity of water inhibits the growth of trees.

(c) Species:

The commonly found ones are date Palm, Cactus, Babul, Neem, Piluri etc.

Forest Type # 5. Desert Vegetation:

Desert vegetation is restricted to the Thar Desert of western Rajasthan. The region suffers from extreme aridity, hence vegetation is essentially 'xerophytic' in nature. Cacti are the most common species. They have thick fleshy stems that store water and thrones as modified leaves, so as to check transpiration loss. The roots of desert plants reach far deep into the soil since the ground water level is extremely low.

Forest Type # 6. Himalayan Vegetation:

The natural vegetation here is so diverse that it is almost amazing. Due to the great height of the mountain range, climatic characteristics vary from the foothills to the peak. As one goes higher and higher, the temperature declines at a steady rate, and the amount of rainfall received is also affected.

Moreover, temperature and rainfall characteristics vary between the Eastern and Western Himalayas. The Himalayan vegetation is dominated by altitude.

This gives rise to three distinct zones:

(a) The Tropical Zone, found at an elevation of 500 to 1,600 meters. It stretches along the 'Terai', or the sub-mountain belt of the Himalaya. The forests here are dense evergreen in the east and deciduous in the west. Sal forests are found in this zone. Other species include, Mango, Sal, Sissoo, Bamboos, and various types of grasses and fern climbers are found in plenty, as are bamboo and wild bananas.

(b) The Temperate Zone, extends between 1,600 and 3,500 meters. This is the coniferous forest belt. Oak, beech, maple, birch, pine, deodar, alder, poplar, elm, willow, etc. are found here, along with a variety of herbs and shrubs. At higher altitudes, blue pine, fir, deodar, silver fir, cypress, juniper etc. are found.

(c) The Alpine Zone extends from 3,500 to 4,500 meters. Vegetation is sparse in this zone.

Rhododendrons, Chrysanthemum, Primula etc. adorn these regions.

At an elevation above 4,500 meters, eternal snow prevails.

Forest Type # 7. Tidal or Mangrove Forests:

(a) Location:

The Mangrove Forests are found in the deltaic regions and in and around the tidal creeks. They can be found in the deltas of the Ganga, Brahmaputra, Mahanadi, Godavari, Krishna and Cauvery. The densest and most continuous mangrove forests are found in the Sunderbans in the Ganga delta.

(b) Characteristics:

The forests are composed mainly of evergreen species. The trees have to survive in saline soil amidst constant rise and fall of tides and deep accumulation of mud. The trunks are supported by “stilt-roots”. These act as respiratory roots under submerged conditions. One of the main feature of such forests is profuse growth with tangle of climbers.

(c) Species:

The most common tree in the Sundarbans is Sundari, which gives the forest its name. Other important mangrove trees are Garan, Gewa, Hetal, Keya, Keora, Bog la etc.