

# Forests: Our Lifeline

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**Forest** is a large area of land where a large number of tall trees, herbs, and shrubs grow naturally.

Forest have four layers -

- emergent layer
- canopy layer
- understory
- forest layer

## **Features-**

- In a forest, different types of trees , grasses, herbs, shrubs, climbers are present
- The vegetation in a forest provides shelter to various animals, birds, and insects.
- It maintains the balance of nature. All the components of forests are interconnected with each other in the form of food chain.
- Decomposers increase the soil fertility. They convert dead plants and animals into humus. Humus is the topmost, dark brown, fertile layer of soil.
- Forests also maintain the balance of oxygen and carbon dioxide.
- They improve the quality of air as plants absorb CO<sub>2</sub> gas from atmosphere and give out oxygen. This oxygen is used by animals for respiration.

Forest are very important not only because they are the source of various useful products but also because they are essential for maintaining the ecological balance.

## **Role of forests-**

- Forests are the **“lungs” and serve as water purifying systems** of nature.
- They are also **home to a large number of animals and plants**.
- Forests act as a natural absorber of rain water thereby helps in preventing floods.
- Forests keep the climate of an area cool.
- Forests forms a roof-like covering over the other plants, it is known as a **canopy**.

## **List of activities that need to be avoided in order to prevent a destruction of valuable forests**

- Cutting of trees for obtaining timber or other products
- Construction of roads through forest regions
- Construction of buildings near or inside forest regions
- Overgrazing by animals, etc.