

Rain Forest facts from: <http://www.tropical-rainforest-facts.com/>

Canopy Layer General Facts

- The Canopy Layer lies right beneath the Emergent Layer of the tropical rainforest and above both the Understory and Floor layer.
- About 80% of the sunlight is absorbed at the Canopy Layer, leaving the below layers with very little sunlight.
- Most of the rainfall is captured by the Canopy Layer and very little gets to the plants at the lower levels. The plants at lower levels must survive on the excess rain that trickles off of the trees and drips from the leaves.

Canopy Layer Animal Facts

- Food is plentiful at this layer and animals such as squirrel monkeys, bats, snakes, tree frogs and toucans eat the fruit and seeds from the trees.
- Many animals take shelter in this layer from predators on the Floor layer as well as from strong winds and rainstorms.
- Animals in the Canopy Layer often need to fly, jump, glide and hop to get around between the gaps in the trees.

Because of the compact nature of the leaves and branches of the flora in the Canopy Layer, it makes seeing more than a few feet away very difficult. Songs and high pitched calls help the animals in the Canopy Layer communicate with one another when they cannot see each other.

Understory Layer Animal Facts

- Countless insects can be found in the understory layer including bees, stick insects, bullet ants, beetles, and butterflies. Many insects are preyed upon by numerous birds, geckos and monitors.
- Bats, monkeys, snakes, lizards, jaguars and frogs are some of the common animals found at this layer. Many of them spend a lot of time in the tree branches either living off the insects or looking for prey below.
- Camouflage is often used by various species of reptiles that live in the Understory layer. It provides protection from predators by helping them blend into their surroundings. Since competition for food is fierce, it also helps them sneak up on unsuspecting prey without being seen until it is too late.
- The spots on the jaguar resemble a leaf-like pattern and when waiting in the branches, help it to stay camouflaged. It then drops from above onto its prey below.
- Tree frogs and Salamanders require a lot of humidity to keep their skin from drying out so they do well in the Understory Layer.
- There are approximately 150 species of butterflies that live in the Understory Layer.

Understory Layer Plant Facts

- Plant growth in the Understory Layer is limited to mostly smaller trees, low lying shrubs, ferns, climbing plants and native bananas. Research indicates that plants do not usually grow past 12 feet (3.6 meters) in this layer.
- There are a relatively small amount of flowering plants in the Understory Layer. The plants that do flower are often brightly colored so they can be seen easily in such surroundings by pollinators, and strongly scented so they can attract pollinators with their smell.

- This layer of the rainforest produces many popular house plants. Zebra plants, Ferns, Philodendrons and Prayer plants are among some of house plants from this layer that do well in dimly lit conditions.
- Tree trunks in this layer tend to be thin because they are usually younger, smaller trees growing in this layer. All shapes, size, colors and textures of tree trunks can be found here. Moss, fungus and algae are usually found growing on the trees, often giving the appearance of different shades or colors on the same tree.

Climbing plants also do well in this environment. They begin by germinating on the Forest floor and then use a host tree to facilitate a steady upwards growth until they reach the adequate sunlight they require.