

All About Palm Oil

What is Palm Oil?

Palm oil is an important and widely-used vegetable oil which is made from the fruit of the palm tree. It is used in a huge variety of different foods and household products but growing palm trees affects the world's tropical rainforests by contributing to **deforestation**. Many **endangered** species which inhabit these rainforests are harmed by the widespread farming of palm oil.

Did You Know...?

- About half of all packaged products sold in a supermarket contain palm oil!
- Iceland, a supermarket in the UK, has decided to cease using palm oil in their products because they think the way it is made causes too much harm to our rainforests.

Why Is It Useful?

Palm oil is an incredibly useful ingredient which is found in many kinds of different products sold in our supermarkets. It remains a solid at room temperature, is inexpensive and helps to moisturise our skin. As a result, palm oil is

included in many products we use every day, from chocolate to instant noodles and shampoo to soap.

What's the Problem with Palm Oil?

Palm trees grow naturally in a tropical climate so many farmers are clearing tropical rainforests in order to farm large areas of palm trees in a **plantation**. Clearing rainforests by felling or burning trees is known as **deforestation**. However, these ancient rainforests are a habitat for a diverse population of animals and plants. Many animals who live in the rainforests, such as orangutans and tigers, are already **endangered**. Also, rainforests help to keep our air clean by absorbing harmful carbon dioxide and producing oxygen.

What Can We Do to Help?

There are several ways in which we can help protect rainforests for the



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future. Firstly, we can choose products that either do not contain any palm oil or those which contain sustainable palm oil. This means that the palm oil was grown and made in a responsible way which does not harm animals or the rainforests. Secondly, we can write to the manufacturers of our favourite foods to persuade them to use sustainable palm oil, if they do not already.

Glossary

deforestation – The action of clearing a wide area of trees.

endangered – An animal species which is in danger of extinction (dying out forever).

plantation – An area in which trees or crops have been planted.



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Questions

1. How is palm oil used? Tick **one**.

- ☐ from the fruit of the palm tree
- ☐ in a huge variety of different foods and household products
- ☐ in the widespread farming of palm oil
- ☐ to contribute to deforestation

2. In which products is palm oil included? Tick **two**.

- ☐ chocolate
- ☐ shampoo
- ☐ furniture
- ☐ clothing

3. Where do palm trees grow naturally? Tick **one**.

- ☐ in a supermarket.
- ☐ in a cold climate.
- ☐ in a desert.
- ☐ in a tropical climate.

4. Match each statement to the correct subtitle.

Why Is It Useful?

What's the Problem with Palm Oil?

Palm oil is used in many kinds of products in our supermarkets.

Farmers are felling trees in rainforests in order to grow palm trees.

Palm oil is used in some products because it moisturises our skin.

Lots of different animals and plants live in rainforests.

5. Fill in the missing words.

About _____ of all packaged products _____ in a supermarket contain _____ oil.

6. Find and copy a word which shows that a supermarket in the UK has stopped using palm oil.

7. What do you think will happen if farmers continue to fell or burn trees in the rainforests?

8. Explain why we should help to protect the rainforests for the future.