

FORESTRY.

A forest is a type of vegetation or an association of plant life dominated by trees. The term forestry refers to the study and management of forests and timber production. It can also be used to refer to all the activities involved in the management, conservation and exploitation of forest resources, since forests yield a wide range of products other than timber.

Forests are conserved and developed for economic, social and environmental benefits. However, man has thoughtlessly especially for agriculture, settlements and industry, timber and fuel, natural forests are disappearing rapidly. This may explain why forest exploitation has always been regarded as a robber industry. Forests originally covered about 60% of the earth's land surface, but human influence has reduced it to only 25% at the fall of the 20th century.

In many parts of the world, especially in the tropics, the primary forest cover has disappeared leaving and what exists today are secondary forests. On the other hand, natural forests still exist in areas of limited human influence.

World forest types are divided into two types namely;

(1) Natural forest;

These can be sub divided into;

(i) Tropical hardwood forests

(ii) Temperate forests

(2) man-made forests-

these are forests planted by man after realizing that over depending on natural forests may lead to complete disappearance of the forest resource. Its origin was in Europe and then spreading worldwide with most consisting of temperate soft wood tree species.

TROPICAL FORESTS.

These occur in a belt of land lying within 20° north and south of the equator which is about half of the world's forest cover estimated at about 40 million square kilometers, yet about 90% of this being of hard wood tree species. These forests are found in tropical Africa, Central and South America, Monsoon Asia and Australia. The largest single expanse of tropical forest cover is the Amazon basin of South America which stretches from the Atlantic coast of South America up to the Andes mountains in the west, and it also runs from the Guinea highlands in the north to the tropic of Capricorn in the south, followed by the Congo basin forest covering the whole basin drained by river Congo and its tributaries like rivers Ubangi and Kasai. It covers the lowlands of the Republic of Congo and Congo Brazaville.

Tropical forests comprise of three main types namely;

(i) Tropical Rain (Equatorial) forests,

(ii) Tropical deciduous (seasonal) forests,

(iii) Tropical Swamp (Mangrove) forests