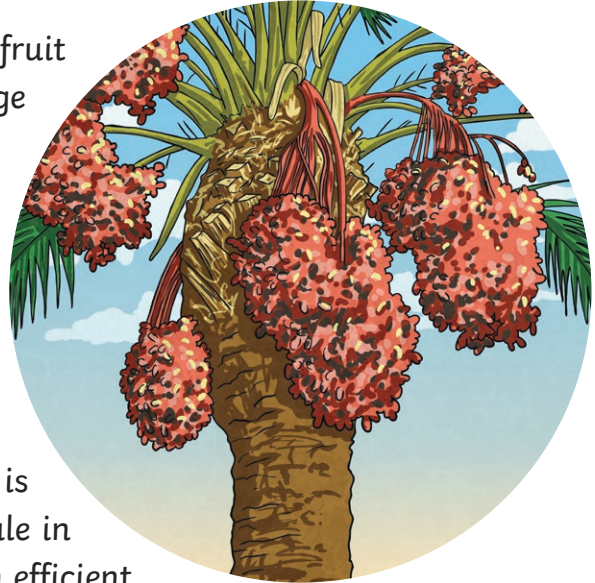


Palm Oil

What is Palm Oil?

Palm oil is a vegetable oil made from the fruit of the oil palm tree. About the size of a large olive, the fruit (which contains 30-35% oil) contains a single seed. The palm tree is a tropical plant that grows mostly in countries around the equator as it grows best in hot, humid conditions. Palm oil is not a new product and has been used for many years. However, the use of palm oil has increased in recent years and it is believed that over half of the products for sale in the supermarket contain it. Although it is an efficient source of vegetable oil, its popularity and recent growth in production is threatening the environment and already vulnerable wildlife.



Pros and Cons

Indonesia and Malaysia are two of the world's largest exporters of palm oil and these countries, and others like them, have come to rely on the industry to provide large numbers of people with jobs and economic security. Palm oil has quite literally helped developing countries to grow both socially and economically.

Despite this advantage, palm oil plantations are responsible for the clearing of vast areas of rainforests, a process known as deforestation, which destroys the natural habitat of many endangered animals and plants. As the demand for palm oil increases, so does the impact it has on the world.

Indigenous people (natives) of the rainforests are also affected by the increase in palm oil plantations. As forests are destroyed to make room for more palm oil trees, tribal communities are forced from their homes. Their rights within and knowledge of the local area are ignored and subsequently, their lives are changed forever.



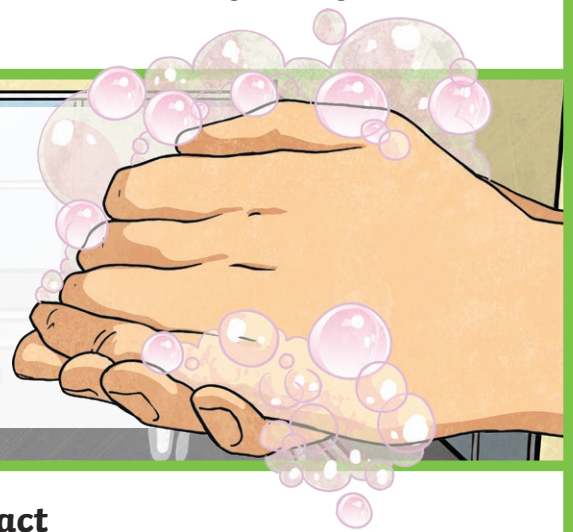
Sustainability

We do not need to stop buying products that contain palm oil. In fact, this could prove almost impossible. However, there are a few steps that we can all take in order to limit the social and environmental costs and impact of the palm oil industry.

In 2014, the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) was set up in order to make the production of palm oil as sustainable as possible. Members of the RSPO produce palm oil according to certain agreements and standards, thereby limiting the environmental impact whilst continuing to meet the world's growing demands.

Did You Know...?

Take a trip to the supermarket and you'll find it hard to pick up a product that does not contain palm oil. It is used to make pizza, margarine and ice-cream as well non-edible items such as washing detergent, conditioner and soap.



What Can We Do?

If everyone makes a few small changes, the increasing demand for palm oil can be met but the impact on the environment can be limited. When shopping, look out for one of the following on the items that you buy:

Interesting Fact

One desirable aspect of palm oil is that it does not melt at high temperatures. It is therefore an ideal ingredient to be used in products that are required to keep their shape and form in hot conditions. As a result, palm oil is widely found in lipsticks, chocolate and biscuits, all of which would melt easily without it.



The RSPO label - this means that the palm oil in the product was produced in a socially and environmentally responsible way.

The Green Palm label - proceeds to the Green Label organisation help growers to make the transition to producing palm oil in a sustainable way.

Questions

1. Palm oil trees grow best in...Tick one

☐ hot, dry conditions

☐ cold, wet conditions

☐ hot, humid conditions

☐ warm, sunny conditions

2. Find and copy a word which means *defenceless*.

3. How do Indonesia and Malaysia depend on the palm oil industry. Explain your answer fully.

4. Explain in your own words what deforestation is.

5. Fill in the missing words in the sentence below:

As forests are _____ to make room for more palm oil trees, tribal
_____ are forced from their homes.

6. Explain in your own words why palm oil is a good product to use in chocolate.

7. In which year did the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil begin? Tick one.

☐ 2004

☐ 1924

☐ 1994

☐ 2014

8. Who do Green Palm support?

9. How are humans affected by the palm oil industry. Explain your answer.

Answers

1. Palm oil trees grow best in...Tick one

☐ hot, dry conditions

☐ cold, wet conditions

☒ **hot, humid conditions**

☐ warm, sunny conditions

2. Find and copy a word which means *defenceless*.

Vulnerable

3. How do Indonesia and Malaysia depend on the palm oil industry. Explain your answer fully.

Pupil's own response, such as: Indonesia and Malaysia depend on the palm oil industry because they are the world's largest exporters of it. It provides lots of people with jobs and economic security which helps the countries to grow and develop.

4. Explain in your own words what deforestation is.

Pupil's own response, such as: Deforestation is the process by which large areas of rainforest are cleared and so the natural habitats of animals and plants is destroyed.

5. Fill in the missing words in the sentence below:

As forests are **destroyed** to make room for more palm oil trees, tribal **communities** are forced from their homes.

6. Explain in your own words why palm oil is a good product to use in chocolate.

Pupil's own response, such as: Palm oil is a good product to use in chocolate because it does not melt at high temperatures and it keeps its shape which is good as chocolate can melt easily otherwise which becomes messy and difficult to eat.

7. In which year did the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil begin? Tick one.

☐ 2004

☐ 1924

☐ 1994

☒ **2014**

8. Who do Green Palm support?

The growers of palm oil

9. How are humans affected by the palm oil industry. Explain your answer.

Pupil's own response, such as: The indigenous people of the rainforests are affected by the palm oil industry because as the rainforests are cleared, they are forced to move out of their homes. Their rights and knowledge are ignored and they have to start living in a new, strange place.