

A wooden boardwalk made of light-colored planks winds through a dense, lush green forest. The path curves from the bottom left towards the top left, disappearing into the thick foliage. Sunlight filters through the trees, creating dappled light on the path and the surrounding vegetation. The background is filled with various shades of green, from deep forest greens to bright highlights on leaves.

Trees are Life

Trees are the major source for cleaning the atmosphere. They absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen which is essential for all living things.

Their roots stabilize soil, preventing erosion, while the trees themselves are home to countless species. For example, birds build nests on tree branches. Hundreds of insects also find trees as a home like ants, termites, and butterflies. Finally, trees supply people with timber.

So, what is making trees disappear? People are cutting down trees in large quantities. Why are trees cut down like this? Well, there is nothing new about people cutting down trees. In ancient times, Greece, Italy and Great Britain were covered with forests. Over the centuries, those forests were gone. A major cause for the present destruction is the demand for wood. There isn't enough wood in the industrialized countries to satisfy demand. Therefore, wood companies have taken wood from the forests of Asia, Africa, South America, and even Siberia. In many areas, poor people depend on wood for cooking. We also use wood in manufacturing paper that we all need. Wood is also used for construction and in making furniture.

In Brazil and central America, large land owners raise lots of cattle. They put many cattle on too little land. When that land is ruined, they start with the forests. Then they move the cattle into the forest land. This way both land and forest are destroyed.

The increasing population of our planet may decrease trees. In the future, more people won't have enough food to eat and they'll destroy more forests to make farms. And if forests are cut down we'll lose most of the species of wildlife, plants and animals. How bad are the effects of this problem? The destruction of rainforests is one of the world's threatening problems. It affects the people who live there. However, it also has other effects far away. For example, on the mountain sides trees help to absorb heavy rain. When the trees are felled, the rain pours all at once into the rivers and there are terrible floods downstream. In tropical countries, soil quickly dries out and becomes worn out. Finally, the loss of forests raises the temperature and changes our planet's climate, and if the temperature goes up a few degrees, the ice of the Arctic regions would melt, and the sea level would go up. If the sea level rises a few meters, many big cities will be under water.

What can be done to save trees? One way is to replant trees on the old forest land. Some countries have already turned areas of forests into national parks, strictly forbidding acts of tree-felling and activities that damage the forest and its wildlife. Personally, I think we should all cooperate to solve this problem because we all share one planet ■

by Arwa Omary 13, Lebanon, TUNZA Junior Board Member.