

RAINFOREST PRODUCTS

PLANT	CHARACTERISTICS	PRODUCT
rattan	climbing palm reaching 200m long ; from southeast Asia	wicker
rosewood	trees grow to 45m tall ; up to ½ million mites have been found on the leaves of an average sized tree	wooden recorder (musical instrument)
ebony	bat-pollinated; seeds also dispersed by bats	
mahogany	bat-pollinated; seeds also dispersed by bats	
kapok	the fluff surrounding seeds; bat-pollinated	used for stuffing cushions
Brazil nuts	trees grow 35-50m high and take 15-20 years to mature and fruit; from the Amazon; nuts collected during the wet season; have been harvested since the 1700's; the nuts fall to the forest floor where small rodents carry them away	nuts for eating and baking, sold in the shell and without the shells
cashews	bat-pollinated; from Brazil	nuts for eating and baking
rubber	20-40m tall tree but in plantations about 25m; from the Amazon; collected during the dry season; not grown in plantations in the Amazon because of a blight that kills the tree, so now grown in plantations in Malaysia	baseball (cork wrapped in rubber); rubber boots; surgical instruments and tubing, rubber gloves

PLANT	CHARACTERISTICS	PRODUCT
vanilla	a vine or liana ; pollinated by one species of bee	flavor for baking; scent for candles, cologne
bamboo	from southeast Asia	chopsticks; skewers; toothpicks; bamboo shoots

PLANT	CHARACTERISTICS	PRODUCT
gutta-percha		has been used in the core of golf balls; has been used for coating for undersea cabling; bark also has medicinal uses
sorva	small trees grow 3-5m tall ; fruit is small and round, resembles guava, has a sweet pulp; from the Amazon	trees tapped for latex which is used to flavor drinks, also for chewing gum, glue, varnish, caulk, and other industrial products
cocoa/chocolate	grows to 7m tall , has shiny leaves up to 12 inches long, small pink flowers that sprout directly from the trunk and older branches; beans are seeds in 12-inch long pods; beans are purple or offwhite, look like almonds	chocolate bar (with natural chocolate); cocoa butter handcreams, suntan lotions
coffee	shrubs grow 7-8m tall; has dark green glossy leaves 10-15cm long; white flowers emerge from the branches along with the leaves and smell of jasmine; the ripe fruit is red and called a cherry, and contains the green coffee bean; originally from Africa; second largest commodity in dollar volume in international trade today, second only to oil	beverage made from ground coffee beans; <i>look for shade-grown coffee which retains some of the rainforest trees rather than plantation-grown which is grown where rainforests have been cut down</i>
annatto (<i>Bixin orellana</i>)	shrubs grow 2-6m ; much from Brazil	seeds used for reddish-orange food colouring, especially in dairy products, since petroleum-based food colours long banned

PLANT	CHARACTERISTICS	PRODUCT
chicle/sapodillo tree	<p>trees grow 45m tall and form a dense canopy; trunk up to 125cm in diameter; bark deeply fissured and grey, dark green leaves with yellowish undersides and veins, 5-15cm long by 3-8cm wide; cream-coloured flowers densely packed at branch ends; from the Amazon, also Central America and the West Indies; can live as a sapling in the understory until a gap opens up, then it takes over as a dominant species; batt-pollinated, seeds also dispersed by bats; fruit is called a sapodillo</p>	<p>latex is extracted from the sap of the trunk and is a natural base for natural chewing gum (many chewing gums today are petroleum-based synthetics)</p> <p>sapodillo fruit is food through the dry season (March-May) for animals including Howling and Spider Monkeys, parrots, kinkajous, tapirs, peccaries and bats</p> <p>sapodillo fruit also used in custards, ice creams, syrups, jams (extremely popular in tropical America)</p> <p>timber</p>
bananas		fresh fruit; dried banana chips
oranges		oranges (<i>some are grown in Brazil where rainforests once grew</i>); orange juice
palm oil	<p>the palm grows to 25m; feathery leaves up to 8m long; may occur in stands of tens of thousands of individuals; large clusters of dark purple olive-sized fruits; similar in taste to olive oil; higher in protein than soybean and animal proteins</p>	any cookie or food package that includes palm oil in its list of ingredients