

Words to Learn in Preparation for Your Trip

Adaptation – Adaptation is the change in living organisms that allow them to survive in a particular environment. Adaptations can be structural, behavioral or physiological.

Arboretum –An arboretum is a botanical garden containing living collections of primarily trees intended for display, preservation, and scientific study.

Botany – The scientific study of plants. A scientist who studies plants is a *botanist*.

Carbon Dioxide – CO₂. One molecule of carbon and two molecules of oxygen combine to make this invisible gas that people (and other animals) exhale. Plants take in this gas as part photosynthetic process. It's also the fizz in your soft drink!

Carnivores – Animals and a small number of plants and fungi that get most of their nutrition from eating the flesh of animals.

Carnivorous plant- A plant that has adapted to wet, boggy soils that tend to be low in nitrogen. These plants have developed various mechanisms to lure, trap, and digest small animals (usually insects), as a source of nitrogen.

Chlorophyll – The green molecule in plants that absorbs energy from light. Chlorophyll is involved in photosynthesis.

Defense mechanism - A range of adaptations evolved by plants that improve their chances of survival and reproduction by reducing the impact of herbivores, i.e. spines, toxic compounds.

Desert-A region that receives less than 250 mm/year (10 inches)of water falling as precipitation.

Drip tip-A drip tip is the long, sharply-pointed leaf tip on some rainforest plant's leaves that allows water to flow quickly off the leaf surface. This is beneficial to prevent fungal and bacterial growth.

Environment – includes all the biotic (living) and abiotic (non-living) factors surrounding an organism, i.e. plants, animals, climate, soils.

Flower – The reproductive structure of a flowering plant. Flowers may contain only female structures (stigma, style, and ovary), male structures (stamen and anthers) or both. The color, scent, and shape of flowers attract pollinators (bees, bats, flies, etc.).

Food Web – describes the feeding relationship between species living in the same environment.

Fruit – The ripened ovary of a flower, which contains the fertile seeds that will grow into new plants. A tomato is a fruit because it contains seeds.

Habitat – The area or type of area where a particular plant or animal is found.

Herbivore – An animal that derives its nutrition solely from plant sources.

Leaves – Primary site of photosynthesis.

Native Plants – Plants that occur naturally in a given area. In contrast, exotic species are plants from other places.

Omnivore – Animals that derive their nutrition from both plants and animal flesh.

Organism – An organism is a living thing that grows, reproduces, and evolves.

Oxygen – An important element that is a byproduct of plant respiration. Though it forms only 21% of the air we breathe, oxygen is essential for maintaining life on our planet.

Photosynthesis – Plants make their own food (carbohydrates) through a process called photosynthesis (which means “make from light”). Photosynthesis uses water, carbon dioxide, and the energy from sunlight to produce these carbohydrates which are then converted by the plants into sugars for growth and reproduction. Although the primary site of photosynthesis is the leaves, any part of the plant containing chlorophyll (giving it a green color) is capable of undergoing photosynthesis.

Plants – Living organisms belonging to the kingdom Plantae.

Pollination – A process in which pollen is transferred, primarily by wind or animals such as insects and birds.

Rainforest – A dense forest that develops in areas near the Equator characterized by warm temperatures, abundant rain, and no difference in seasons.

Reproduction – process in which new plants are produced. Plants are capable of sexual reproduction (involving seeds or spores) as well as asexual (vegetative) reproduction.