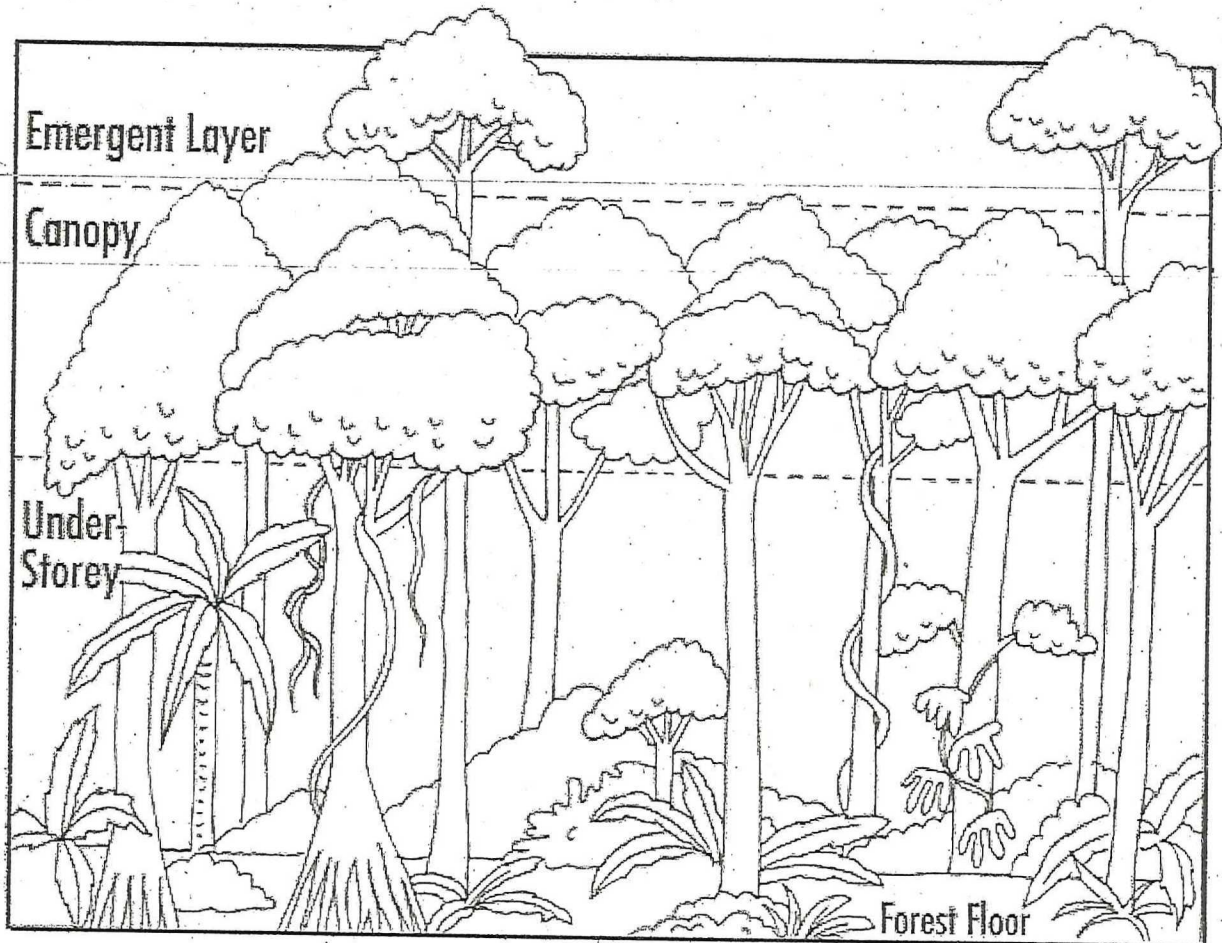


# Structure of a Typical Rain Forest



SUBFLOOR (roots grow here)

- 1. Emergent Layer - (overstory)**
  - top layer - very sunny - only the tallest trees reach this level
  - animals - birds, butterflies, small monkeys, snakes, insects
- 2. Canopy layer**
  - thickest layer, most rain is stopped here due to the thick foliage
  - also stops most of the sunlight
  - many trees grow to this height
  - air plants - plants whose roots don't reach the ground
  - Animals - birds, monkeys, frogs, insects, sloths, snakes
- 3. Understory -**
  - many vines, dense vegetation - plants
  - "dark" due to little sunlight - blocked by canopy
  - animals - birds, butterflies, frogs, snakes, insects,
- 4. Forest Floor**
  - dead leaves, twigs, dead plants
  - usually dark, damp
  - usually little/no vegetation due to ↓ sunlight, ↓ rain, ↓ wind
  - only about 2% of the sunlight reaches this level
  - Animals - S. America - Jaguars, Africa - leopards, gorillas
  - Asia - Tapirs, Tigers, elephants

## Importance of Forests:

Watershed - area of land that contributes  $H_2O$  to a stream or river

Habitats + Ecosystems - serves as a home (habitat) to millions of animals

Economic Benefits - timber, wood, tourism

### Climate Control -

- trees help to remove air pollution
- absorb  $CO_2$  from atmosphere
- trees + soil help regulate atmospheric temperatures by evapotranspiration (helps to stabilize climate)