



Interesting Information about the Cloud Forest

Instructor: cut between the statements to separate them into individual strips. Hand one strip to each student as students enter the room. To accommodate all students in your class, you will likely have to make extra copies of this document and allow more than one student to receive the same statement (or add your own cloud forest facts!).

Orchids, the flowering plants we often see growing in pots in people's homes, grow on the tree branches in the cloud forest.

Some flowers have a shape that perfectly matches the shape of a hummingbird's beak.

An average of 118 inches (230 cm) of precipitation (rain) falls each year in the cloud forest of Monteverde. Compare that to an average of about 39 inches (99 cm) of precipitation in Washington, D.C.!

Winds are so strong and constant at the highest elevations of the tropical montane cloud forest that the trees cannot grow more than 5-10 meters (about 16-33 feet) high.

There are over 400 species of birds living in the cloud forest of Monteverde. (If that doesn't sound like a lot, consider the fact that there are about twice as many bird species in the United States, but the whole country of Costa Rica is only about the size of West Virginia!)



One of the orchid species that lives in the cloud forest has a flower that is smaller than your pinky nail.

Leaf cutter ants that live in the cloud forest cut up leaves and use them to grow fungus gardens; then they eat the fungus.

Over time, areas of forest that are cleared for farming lose all of the nutrients that are present in the soil.

Some cloud forest plants have leaves whose “drip tips” allow rain water to run off easily.

The strangler fig tree starts out as a small plant that attaches itself to a tree, then slowly grows to surround the tree, kill it, and take over its place in the forest.

Some tree frogs don’t raise their tadpoles in streams or ponds. Instead they use the natural “bowl” of water that collects in the center of plants that live up in the trees.

Hummingbirds can beat their wings 60 times per second. (How many times can you flap your arms in a second?)

Quinine, a medicine used to fight the disease Malaria, is derived from a cloud forest tree.