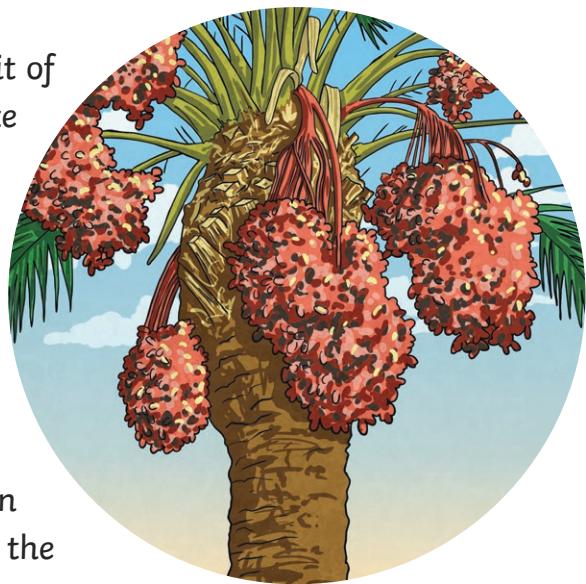


# Palm Oil

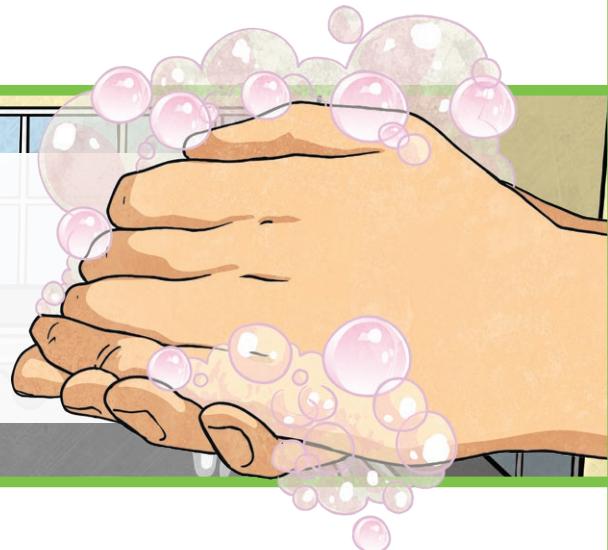
## What is Palm Oil?

Palm oil is a vegetable oil made from the fruit of the oil palm tree. The fruit itself is about the size of a large olive and has a single seed inside. The palm tree grows in countries around the equator as it prefers hot and humid conditions. Palm oil is found in nearly half of the products sold in supermarkets today and is used in everyday products such as chocolate, ice-cream, pizza and baked goods. Sadly however, the large-scale production of palm oil is having a negative impact on the environment and local wildlife.



## Did You Know...?

As well as being a key ingredient in many food-based products, palm oil is also used in a variety of other products such as washing detergent, conditioner and soap.



## Positives and Negatives

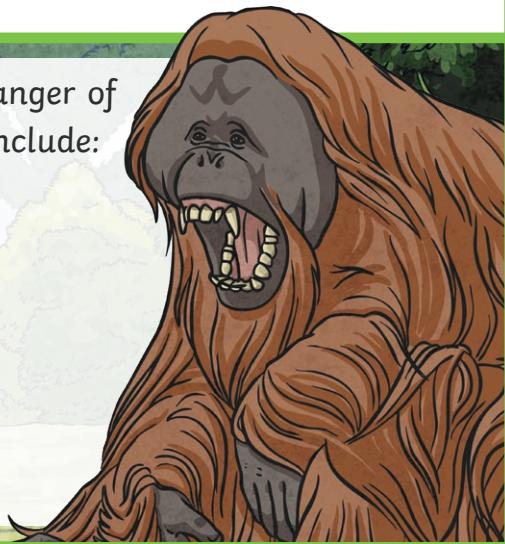
Many developing countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia depend heavily on the palm oil industry. Plantations provide rural farmers and local people with essential jobs which help them to provide for themselves and their families. Without palm oil, the country's economies would suffer.

However, in order to make room for palm oil plantations, large areas of rainforests have been, and continue to be, cleared to make room to grow palm oil trees. This destroys the natural habitat of many animals and plants, many of which are endangered. This process is known as deforestation.

People who live in and around the rainforests are also affected by the increase in demand for palm oil. Local tribes are forced to leave their homes and settle elsewhere, often in an unfamiliar place that they do not know how to survive in.

There are many species that are believed to be in danger of extinction due to the impact of deforestation. These include:

- the Orangutan,
- the Sumatran Tiger,
- the Sun Bear,
- the Asian Rhinoceros,
- the Proboscis Monkey and
- the Pygmy Elephant.



### Can Palm Oil be Produced Responsibly?

Experts believe that the high demand for palm oil can be met but that it must be done in a responsible and sustainable way. More and more palm oil growers are becoming members of organisations such as the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil, RSPO for short. This company supports growers to change to more sustainable methods of producing palm oil and makes sure that they follow certain rules and standards so that the impact on the environment is as small as possible. Other organisations are working with growers to help them make the change into becoming a sustainable and responsible producer of palm oil. Sadly however, there is still a long way to go until all palm oil is produced in an environmentally friendly manner.



### Look Out!

When you next go shopping, look for the RSPO or the Green Palm label. Products with these labels on mean that the organisations ensure that the palm oil has been resourced and produced in a sustainable way.



# Questions

1. How big is the fruit of a palm oil tree? Tick one.

- a small seed
- a large olive
- a small olive
- a coconut

2. Name three products which contain palm oil.

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3. Find and copy a word which means *muggy*.

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4. Fill in the missing words in the sentence below:

\_\_\_\_\_ provide rural farmers and local people with \_\_\_\_\_  
jobs which help them to provide for themselves and their families.

5. How does the palm oil industry affect the rainforests? Explain your answer.

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6. What can shoppers do to help limit the impact of the palm oil industry on the environment? Explain your answer fully.

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7. What does RSPO stand for? Tick one.

- Responsible Sustainable Palm Oil
- Roundtable on Sensible Palm Oil
- Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil
- Responsible Sensible Palm Oil

8. What do the RSPO do? Explain your answer and refer to the text.

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# Answers

1. How big is the fruit of a palm oil tree? Tick one.

- a small seed
- a large olive
- a small olive
- a coconut

2. Name three products which contain palm oil.

**Accept any three of the following: chocolate, ice-cream, pizza, baked-goods, washing detergent, conditioner, soap**

3. Find and copy a word which means *muggy*.

**humid**

4. Fill in the missing words in the sentence below:

**Plantations** provide rural farmers and local people with **essential** jobs which help them to provide for themselves and their families.

5. How does the palm oil industry affect the rainforests? Explain your answer.

**Pupil's own response, such as: The palm oil industry affects the rainforests because of deforestation. Rainforests are cleared so that palm oil trees can be planted which means that animals lose their natural habitat and can become endangered.**

6. What can shoppers do to help limit the impact of the palm oil industry on the environment? Explain your answer fully.

**Pupil's own response, such as: Shoppers can look for the RSPO and the Green Palm labels on the products that they buy because those companies make sure that the palm oil in the products have been produced sustainably and responsibly.**

7. What does RSPO stand for? Tick one.

- Responsible Sustainable Palm Oil
- Roundtable on Sensible Palm Oil
- Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil**
- Responsible Sensible Palm Oil

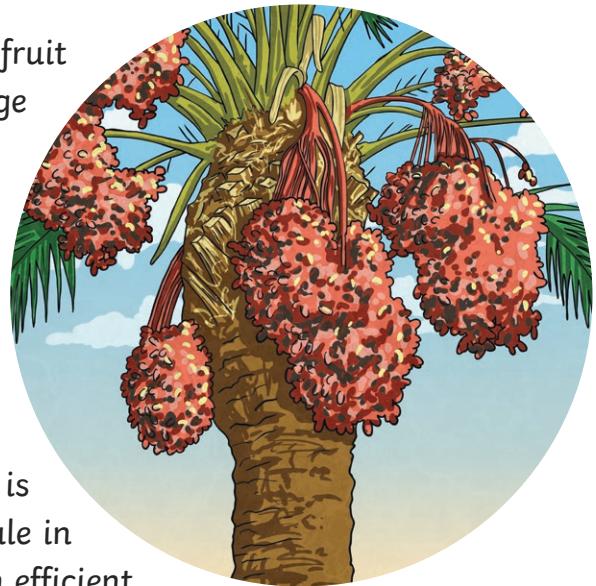
8. What do the RSPO do? Explain your answer and refer to the text.

**Pupil's own response, such as: The RSPO helps growers to produce palm oil in a more responsible way by making sure that they follow certain rules and standards.**

# Palm Oil

## What is Palm Oil?

Palm oil is a vegetable oil made from the fruit of the oil palm tree. About the size of a large olive, the fruit (which contains 30-35% oil) contains a single seed. The palm tree is a tropical plant that grows mostly in countries around the equator as it grows best in hot, humid conditions. Palm oil is not a new product and has been used for many years. However, the use of palm oil has increased in recent years and it is believed that over half of the products for sale in the supermarket contain it. Although it is an efficient source of vegetable oil, its popularity and recent growth in production is threatening the environment and already vulnerable wildlife.

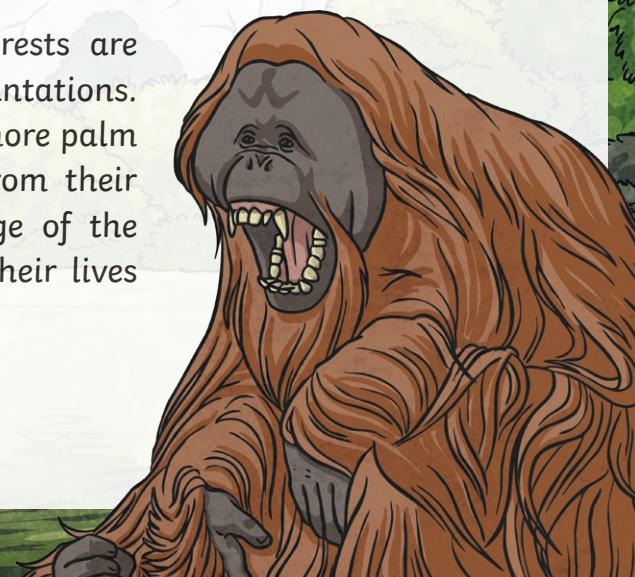


## Pros and Cons

Indonesia and Malaysia are two of the world's largest exporters of palm oil and these countries, and others like them, have come to rely on the industry to provide large numbers of people with jobs and economic security. Palm oil has quite literally helped developing countries to grow both socially and economically.

Despite this advantage, palm oil plantations are responsible for the clearing of vast areas of rainforests, a process known as deforestation, which destroys the natural habitat of many endangered animals and plants. As the demand for palm oil increases, so does the impact it has on the world.

Indigenous people (natives) of the rainforests are also affected by the increase in palm oil plantations. As forests are destroyed to make room for more palm oil trees, tribal communities are forced from their homes. Their rights within and knowledge of the local area are ignored and subsequently, their lives are changed forever.



## Sustainability

We do not need to stop buying products that contain palm oil. In fact, this could prove almost impossible. However, there are a few steps that we can all take in order to limit the social and environmental costs and impact of the palm oil industry.

In 2014, the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) was set up in order to make the production of palm oil as sustainable as possible. Members of the RSPO produce palm oil according to certain agreements and standards, thereby limiting the environmental impact whilst continuing to meet the world's growing demands.

### Did You Know...?

Take a trip to the supermarket and you'll find it hard to pick up a product that does not contain palm oil. It is used to make pizza, margarine and ice-cream as well non-edible items such as washing detergent, conditioner and soap.



### What Can We Do?

If everyone makes a few small changes, the increasing demand for palm oil can be met but the impact on the environment can be limited. When shopping, look out for one of the following on the items that you buy:



### Interesting Fact

One desirable aspect of palm oil is that it does not melt at high temperatures. It is therefore an ideal ingredient to be used in products that are required to keep their shape and form in hot conditions. As a result, palm oil is widely found in lipsticks, chocolate and biscuits, all of which would melt easily without it.

**The RSPO label** - this means that the palm oil in the product was produced in a socially and environmentally responsible way.

**The Green Palm label** - proceeds to the Green Label organisation help growers to make the transition to producing palm oil in a sustainable way.

# Questions

1. Palm oil trees grow best in...Tick one

- hot, dry conditions
- cold, wet conditions
- hot, humid conditions
- warm, sunny conditions

2. Find and copy a word which means *defenceless*.

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3. How do Indonesia and Malaysia depend on the palm oil industry. Explain your answer fully.

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4. Explain in your own words what deforestation is.

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5. Fill in the missing words in the sentence below:

As forests are \_\_\_\_\_ to make room for more palm oil trees, tribal  
\_\_\_\_\_ are forced from their homes.

6. Explain in your own words why palm oil is a good product to use in chocolate.

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7. In which year did the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil begin? Tick one.

- 2004
- 1924
- 1994
- 2014

8. Who do Green Palm support?

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9. How are humans affected by the palm oil industry. Explain your answer.

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# Answers

1. Palm oil trees grow best in...Tick one

- hot, dry conditions
- hot, humid conditions**
- cold, wet conditions
- warm, sunny conditions

2. Find and copy a word which means *defenceless*.

**vulnerable**

3. How do Indonesia and Malaysia depend on the palm oil industry. Explain your answer fully.

**Pupil's own response, such as: Indonesia and Malaysia depend on the palm oil industry because they are the world's largest exporters of it. It provides lots of people with jobs and economic security which helps the countries to grow and develop.**

4. Explain in your own words what deforestation is.

**Pupil's own response, such as: Deforestation is the process by which large areas of rainforest are cleared and so the natural habitats of animals and plants is destroyed.**

5. Fill in the missing words in the sentence below:

As forests are **destroyed** to make room for more palm oil trees, tribal **communities** are forced from their homes.

6. Explain in your own words why palm oil is a good product to use in chocolate.

**Pupil' own response, such as: Palm oil is a good product to use in chocolate because it does not melt at high temperatures and it keeps its shape which is good as chocolate can melt easily otherwise which becomes messy and difficult to eat.**

7. In which year did the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil begin? Tick one.

- 2004
- 1924
- 1994
- 2014**

8. Who do Green Palm support?

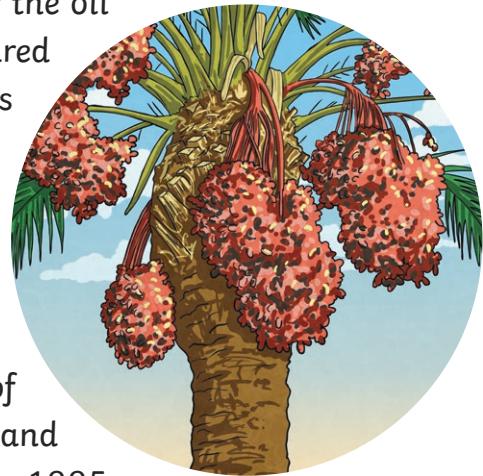
**The growers of palm oil.**

9. How are humans affected by the palm oil industry. Explain your answer.

**Pupil's own response, such as: The indigenous people of the rainforests are affected by the palm oil industry because as the rainforests are cleared, they are forced to move out of their homes. Their rights and knowledge are ignored and they have to start living in a new, strange place.**

# Palm Oil

Palm oil is a vegetable oil derived from the fruit of the oil palm tree (*Elaeis Guineensis*). This reddish coloured fruit is about the size of a large olive and contains a single seed or kernel. Originally grown in West Africa, the palm tree is a tropical plant that grows in countries around the equator (such as Indonesia and Malaysia) as the tree thrives in hot, humid conditions. Each palm oil fruit contains 30-35% oil and a single tree produces 40 kilograms of palm oil every year. Palm oil is in increasing demand and global consumption of it has risen rapidly since 1995.



Today, it is believed that over half of the products for sale in the supermarket contain palm oil. Due to the world's population growth, the demand for palm oil is growing at an alarming rate and there are concerns about the impact that this is having on the environment and wildlife.

## Pros and Cons

The production of palm oil is a controversial topic. Palm oil is the main agricultural export of Indonesia and Malaysia and the production of it provides vital jobs and economic stability in these relatively poor countries. Palm oil has provided jobs for millions of small, rural farms helping them to get out of poverty and to provide for themselves and their families. Many developing countries depend on the palm oil industry in order to grow and prosper.

However, it is widely believed that the palm oil industry is having a devastating impact on the environment, namely the world's rainforests. **Deforestation** is destroying the habitat of many endangered animals such as orangutans, tigers and elephants. Burning forests to clear room so that people can grow palm trees means that the rainforests have less **biodiversity** and leaves animals homeless, starving or ultimately, both.

Another issue related to the growth of the palm oil industry is the negative impact that it has on **indigenous** people of the rainforests. As deforestation occurs, tribal groups are often forced to relocate to areas where resources are scarce and where they have to change their way of life. Sadly, the rights and local knowledge of these indigenous groups are rarely recognised or respected.

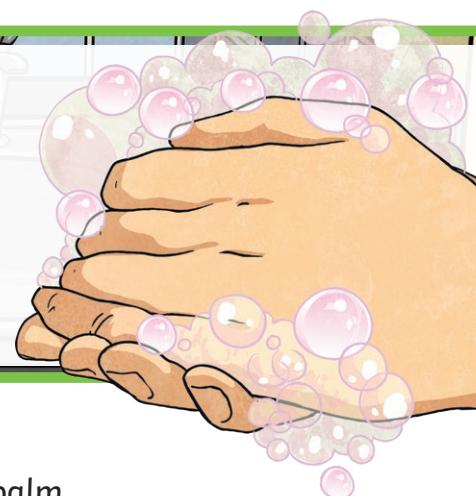
## Sustainability

As the world's population continues to grow, so will the demand for palm oil. So, what can be done to decrease the impact on the environment? Experts believe that palm oil can and should be produced but that it needs to be done in a sustainable and responsible way in order to limit the social and environmental costs.

The RSPO (Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil) was established in 2014 and is the globally recognised standard for sustainable palm oil. Forty per cent of the world's palm oil producers are members of the RSPO and are committed to producing palm oil according to eight different principles. These principles include respecting local communities affected by palm oil mills, complying with relevant laws and regulations and conserving natural resources and biodiversity of the environment.

### Did You Know...?

Palm oil is used in some chocolate to give it a shiny and smooth appearance. It also helps to stop it from melting. Remember to look for the RSPO label next time you buy a bar of chocolate to ensure that it contains sustainably produced palm oil!



### What Can We Do?

It is impossible to stop buying products that contain palm oil altogether. It is found in a wide variety of everyday items from ice-cream to washing detergent to pizza. However, there are certain measures that we can all take to ensure that we are buying as responsibly as possible.



Look for the RSPO label - This will give you the confidence that the palm oil in the product was produced in a socially and environmentally responsible way.

If you can't find the RSPO label, look for the Green Palm label - This label indicates that the product is in support of the transition to sustainable palm oil and proceeds to the Green Label help growers to make the transition.

### Glossary

#### Deforestation

The action of clearing a wide area of trees and forests.

#### Biodiversity

The variety of important plant and animal life in a particular habitat.

#### Indigenous

Originating or occurring naturally in a particular place.

# Questions

1. How much oil does a single palm oil tree produce in a year? Tick one

- 30 kilograms
- 40 kilograms
- 35 kilograms
- 95 kilograms

2. Explain in your own words why the palm oil industry is mainly based in countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia.

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3. Why do you think that the palm oil industry is described as being a 'controversial' topic? Explain fully referring to the text in your answer.

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4. How does deforestation affect the wildlife of the rainforest? Explain your answer fully.

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5. Fill in the missing words in the sentence below:

As deforestation occurs, \_\_\_\_\_ groups are often forced to  
\_\_\_\_\_ to areas where resources are \_\_\_\_\_  
and where they have to change their way of life.

6. Why is it becoming increasingly important that palm oil is produced in a sustainable way? Explain fully referring to the text in your answer.

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7. Find and copy a word that means *ideologies*.

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8. What percentage of the world's palm oil producers are members of the RSPO? Tick one.

- 30%
- 35%
- 40%
- 20%

9. Why is palm oil used in chocolate?

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10. How can shoppers help to reduce the impact that the palm oil industry has on the environment. Explain your answer fully.

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# Answers

1. How much oil does a single palm oil tree produce in a year? Tick one

- 30 kilograms
- 40 kilograms**
- 35 kilograms
- 95 kilograms

2. Explain in your own words why the palm oil industry is mainly based in countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia.

**Pupil's own response, such as:** The palm oil industry is mainly based in countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia as they are near the equator and it says in the text that the palm oil tree thrives in hot and humid conditions. Countries near the equator are very hot and some receive a lot of rainfall.

3. Why do you think that the palm oil industry is described as being a 'controversial' topic? Explain fully referring to the text in your answer.

**Pupil's own response, such as:** I think that the palm oil industry is described as being controversial because there are positive and negative aspects to it. For example, the palm oil industry provides jobs and economic stability to lots of developing countries who now depend on it to grow. However, there are lots of negative aspects such as deforestation, the decline in biodiversity and the negative impact that it has on indigenous people.

4. How does deforestation affect the wildlife of the rainforest? Explain your answer fully.

**Pupil's own response, such as:** Deforestation affects the rainforest because it destroys the natural habitats and homes of animals and wildlife that are already endangered. It also reduces the biodiversity which means that those animals have less food to eat so they could starve to death.

5. Fill in the missing words in the sentence below:

As deforestation occurs, **tribal** groups are often forced to **relocate** to areas where resources are **scarce** and where they have to change their way of life.

6. Why is it becoming increasingly important that palm oil is produced in a sustainable way? Explain fully referring to the text in your answer.

**Pupil's own response, such as:** It is becoming increasingly important that palm oil is produced in a sustainable way because the global population is growing and it says in the text that the demand for it has grown rapidly since 1995.

7. Find and copy a word that means *ideologies*.

### Principles

8. What percentage of the world's palm oil producers are members of the RSPO? Tick one.

- 30%
- 35%
- 40%
- 20%

9. Why is palm oil used in chocolate?

**Palm Oil is used in chocolate because it gives it a shiny, smooth appearance.**

10. How can shoppers help to reduce the impact that the palm oil industry has on the environment. Explain your answer fully.

**Pupil's own response, such as: Shoppers can help to reduce the impact that the palm oil industry has on the environment by only buying products that contain palm oil that has been sustainably produced. They need to look for the RSPO or the Green Palm labels on the products.**