

FORESTS AND THEIR PRODUCTS IN ZAMBIA

FOREST

It is a large area covered chiefly with trees and undergrowth. The Ministry of Lands in Zambia takes care of the planting of trees. It is done by the forestry department which is under the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources.

What are the types of vegetation found in Zambia?

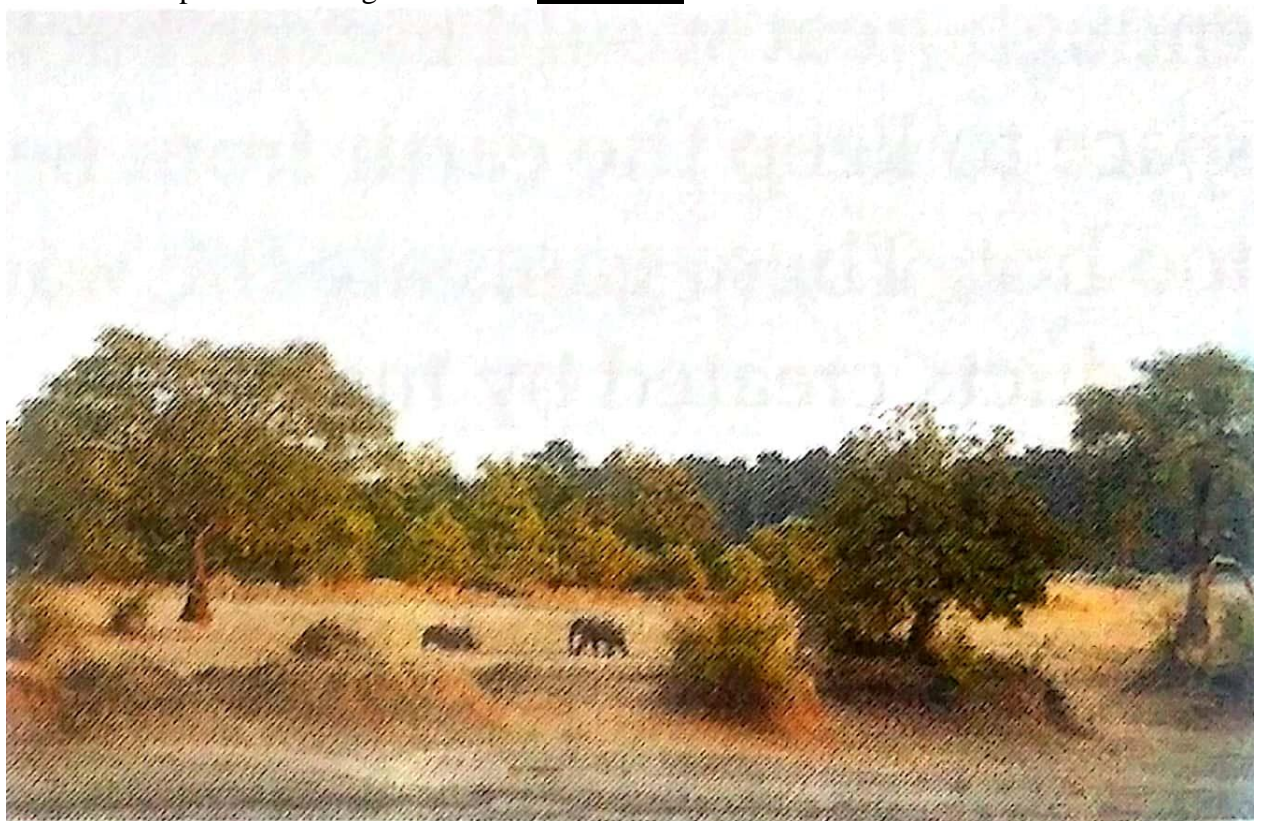
The natural vegetation found in Zambia is referred to as **tropical grassland** or **savanna**. This veld has a mixture of grasses and trees, and there are also areas with denser forests of trees.

Open Forests

These are forests which have a larger area covered with trees. They consist of trees which do not form a dense canopy such as **acacia** and **mopane** trees.

They allow smaller bushes and tall grasses to grow under them.

These make up the savanna grasslands or **woodlands** that cover most of Zambia.

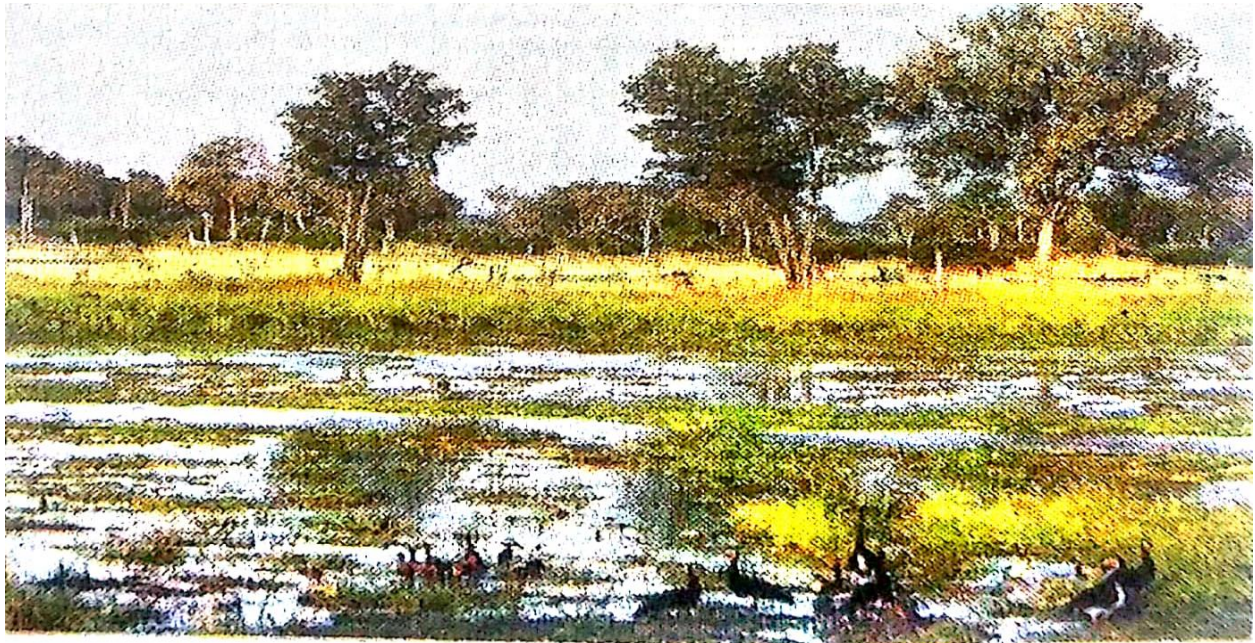


Closed Forests

There are very dense forests where the trees grow very closely together. The tops of the trees are so dense that they form a canopy, blocking out the sun from the ground. The trees may grow naturally or may be planted by people. Where trees have grown naturally, it is called a **natural forest**. If trees have been planted by people, such people such a forest, it is referred to as a forest plantation.



Swamps These surround many of the lakes in Zambia, and about the floodplains that get flooded in the rainy season. The vegetation mostly consists of grasslands and reeds that can survive the waterlogged soil conditions.



Types of tree species

There are two main types of trees found in *Zambian forests and woodlands* :

Indigenous Tree Species

-These are trees naturally found in forests and woodlands in *Zambia* e.g. mopane trees. These forests include the *Livunda dry evergreen forests* south of the *Kabompo river* in *North-Western province*. The dry evergreen forests bordering on *dambo (wetlands)*. They are found also in swampy forests in high rainfall areas in the *Copperbelt*, and the mopane forests of the *Nyika plateau* and *Makutu mountains*. Natural forests are also found along the upper escarpments of the *Luangwa* and *Luapula rivers*.

Savanna woodlands cover most of the country and consist of three types :

1. *Miombo woodlands* cover about 70 % of the country.
2. *Kalahari woodlands* are found in the sandy areas of *Western Province*.
3. *Munga woodlands* consist of *acacia trees*.

Savanna woodlands consist mostly of **deciduous** trees. This means that the trees lose their leaves during the dry season. The trees have adapted to survive dry conditions in different ways.

Evergreen Forests

These occur in high rainfall areas , such as some of the highland areas. There is enough rainfall for trees to grow throughout the year. The trees can grow as tall as 25 to 30 metres.

The evergreen forests include **Mupundu, Kayimbi** and **Mukwa**. The type of evergreen trees called **riverine** forests are found along rivers and swamps, and in areas that get flooded seasonally.

Exotic Tree Species

These are trees planted by people in forest plantations for the purpose of using the wood, or trees from other countries growing in gardens or parks in cities e.g. pine trees.

Forest plantations are found in all the provinces of Zambia. They are planted by the Forestry Department to provide alternative sources of wood so that Zambia's indigenous tree species can be preserved. The largest is Chichele plantation in the Copperbelt.

Pine trees are the most common type of exotic trees planted in forest plantations.

Other exotic tree species include eucalyptus trees.

Main Tree species in the woodlands

1. Msasa Trees -They are the most common trees in the savanna woodlands. They have long tap roots that can reach water deep underground. These trees can grow up to 18 metres high in areas with higher rainfall, such as in Northern and North-Western provinces. The grasses growing in Msasa woodlands provide good grazing for cattle and wildlife.
2. Mopane Woodlands
Mopane trees can resist fires, but are sensitive to frost that might occur when night temperatures drop suddenly.
3. Baobab trees are also found in mopane woodlands. They have thick trunks to store water.
4. Acacia or thorn trees are umbrella-shaped to shade their roots from the hot sun.
5. Mukusi (Zambian teak) trees are found in denser deciduous forests in dry areas.

ACTIVITIES

1. Write down the notes in your exercise book.

Exercise

2. Describe vegetation types and tree species
 - (a) Explain the difference between a forest and a woodland.
 - (b) Explain what a forest plantation is.
 - (c) Give a reason why forest plantations are needed.
 - (d) Name two tree species found in your area
 - (e) Explain the following:
 - (i) Open forest / Closed forest/Indigenous forests/Exotic trees
 - (ii) Give examples of some of these tree species.
 - (f) Find out what the word "Deciduous" means from your dictionary.

