

Montane Forests of India: Notes for UPSC Geography

Geography is an important subject in the UPSC scheme of things. It is important both for the prelims and the UPSC mains exams. In this article, you can get a brief about montane forests and their classifications in India.

Montane Forest in India

Montane ecosystems refer to any ecosystem found in mountains. Dense forests are common in areas of moderate elevations. The montane ecosystems are highly affected by the climate which gets colder as the elevation increases.

At higher elevations, the climate is harsher, with lower temperatures and higher winds, preventing the growth of trees and causing the plant community to transition to montane grasslands, shrublands or alpine tundra.

Their classification is mentioned below.

Wet Temperate Forests

1000-2000 meters – Wet temperate forests are characterised by oak trees and chestnut trees. The mean annual rainfall here is 150 cm to 300 cm, the mean annual temperature is about 11°C to 14°C and the average relative humidity is over 80 per cent. These forests can be found in the higher hilly areas of Kerala and Tamil Nadu, also in the region of Eastern Himalayas to the east of 88°E longitude including the hills of Assam, West Bengal, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland. Chilauni, Indian chestnut, Deodar, machilus, cinnamomum, litsea, plum, blue pine, birch, oak, hemlock, etc. are important species.

Temperate Forests

1500-3000 m – Temperate forests cover the southern slopes of the Himalayas and are characterised by pine, deodar, silver fir, spruce and cedar trees. The overall length of mountain ranges in Kashmir, Uttaranchal, Himachal Pradesh Sikkim and Darjeeling are covered by Himalayan temperate forests. The annual rainfall varies from 150 cm to 250 cm. Fine wood is provided by them which is of great use for timber, construction and sleepers of railways. Oaks, laurels, rhododendrons and some kinds of bamboos are also found in these forests.

Alpine Forest in India

More than 3600 m - Alpine forests are characterised by silver fir, junipers, pines and birches trees. The south-west monsoon here is very feeble and the rainfall is below 100 cm, mostly snow. Lichens and mosses are found in the natural vegetation at higher altitudes.

Relevant Questions for Montane Forests in India

What are the characteristics of montane forests?

The characteristics of montane forests are as follows

1. At the foothills of the Himalayas deciduous forests are found.
2. At an altitude of 1000m to 2000m, they are the moist temperate forests.
3. These forests contain mixed species of broad-leafed evergreen **and** coniferous trees.

Which type of trees are found in the montane forest?

Some significant trees of a montane temperate forest are rhododendrons, ferns, oak, maple, juniper, deodar, chilgoza, etc. These types of forests are found in the state of Assam, Nagaland, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh etc.

What is the alternative name for montane forests?

The alternative name for montane forests is "Alpine" forests.