
Myth No. 4: Tree plantations are good for the environment

Why is this statement simply not true?

Monoculture tree plantations cannot ever improve on the natural environment that is eliminated when plantations are established.

- Indigenous plant species, that supply the needs of both people and wildlife, are lost, and this means that natural ecosystems disappear.
- Replacing natural vegetation and even agricultural cropland with tree plantations leads to the depletion of ground and surface water.
- Monoculture tree plantations affect the health of the soil, increasing acidity, polluting with toxic chemicals, and causing soil compaction.
- The intrinsic beauty of landscapes is destroyed by tree plantations that block out attractive scenery with 'a green blanket of death'.
- Tree plantations usually are of alien tree species that spread out of plantations, invading wetlands, grasslands, heath and forests.
- Local communities, including Indigenous Peoples are displaced from their land, and forced to live in overcrowded unhealthy slums.

Apart from the direct impacts of tree plantations listed above, they also result in many indirect or 'downstream' environmental impacts when they are clear-cut, transported and processed for export as logs, chips or pulp.

- Rivers, lakes and oceans are polluted with mill effluent and chemicals.
- Fuel combustion and chemical processes cause severe air pollution.
- The pulp and paper industry is the third largest greenhouse gas emitter.

It is therefore clear that tree plantations are BAD for the environment.

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