

Origin and Evolution of Tropical Rain Forests

By Robert J. Morley

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Provides the first comprehensive review of the evolution of tropical rain forests on a continent by continent basis, within an up-to-date tectonic, palaeogeographical and palaeoclimatic framework primarily by reference to the record of fossil pollens and spores.

Although tropical rain forests form the world's most species-rich ecosystems, their origin and history remain unclear, except on the very short timescale of the last 40,000 years or so. This book looks at their history on a long term geological and global timescale, commencing with the origin of the angiosperms over 100 million years ago which today overwhelmingly dominate the forests. It also establishes the age of the great tropical rain forest blocks and identifies the world s oldest tropical rain forests. Finally, it compares 20th Century tropical rain forest destruction with prehistoric forest clearance in temperate regions, and looks for analogues of the present phase of destruction within the geological record before considering long term implications of total rain forest destruction.

The book draws on previously unpublished palynological data generated for petroleum companies during the course of hydrocarbon exploration programmes.

It will be of interest to all concerned with tropical rain forests, especially biologists, botanists, ecologists, and students of evolution. It will be invaluable for postgraduates, and advanced undergraduates, as well as stratigraphers, palaeobotainists, palynologists, and petroleum geologists.

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Editorial Review

Review
"No other book contains such an in-depth study of the history and evolution of rain forests set in a geological framework...this will stand as a definitive treatise on the subject." (Biologist, November 2000)

"This book gives an unsurpassed state of the art account and should be used and read by all students of tropical rain forests, vegetation history and history of Angiosperms" (Blumea, Vol 44/2, 1999)

"...will be of interest to all concerned with tropical rain forests." (Bois et Forest des Tropiques, Vol 265, 2000)

"...The quality and the high number of illustrations ...as well as a well-selected, although not exhaustive, bibliography, makes this book enjoyable to read." (Journal of Quaternary Science, July 2003)

From the Back Cover
Although tropical rain forests form the world?s most species-rich ecosystems, their origin and history remain unclear, except on the very short timescale of the last 40 000 years or so. This book provides the first comprehensive review of the history of tropical rain forests on a long term geological timescale, commencing with the origin of the angiosperms over 100 million years ago, which today overwhelmingly dominate these forests. Tropical rain forest evolution is discussed in a global context within an up to date plate tectonic, palaeogeographical and palaeoclimatic framework, primarily by reference to the record of fossil pollen and spores. A particularly important aspect of this book is that in addition to published literature, it relies heavily on unpublished palynological data generated for petroleum companies during the course of hydrocarbon exploration programmes. Without access to such data the book could not have been written. The main text of the book reviews the evolution of tropical rain forests on a continent by continent basis, culminating with a global synthesis of their history in relation to the changing positions of the world?s tectonic plates and changing climates. This section also establishes the age of the great tropical rain forest blocks and identifies the world?s oldest tropical rain forests. The final chapter compares 20th Century tropical rain forest destruction with prehistoric forest clearance in temperate regions, and looks for analogues of the present phase of destruction within the geological record before considering long term implications of total rain forest destruction. The book will be of interest to all concerned with tropical rain forests, especially biologists, botanists, ecologists, and students of evolution. It will be valuable for postgraduates and advanced undergraduates, as well as stratigraphers, palaeobotanists, palynologists, and petroleum geologists.

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