



Figure 30. A forest fire destroyed this forest in Chile. Photo by John Pye.

ARE FOREST FIRES ALWAYS A BAD THING FOR FORESTS?

FAO used the area of forest damaged or destroyed by fire to evaluate the health and vitality of the forests. For some forests, however, occasional fire is needed. In these forests, trees are adapted to withstand fires that burn across the ground. The trees are not killed. Some trees need fire to break open their seeds so they can germinate. Some trees depend on fire to keep other trees from growing in the area. So while many forest fires damage or destroy forests, it is important to remember that some types of forests need ground fires to conserve their biodiversity. When these fires occur, they typically do not destroy the forest.

FACTIVITY:

Forests are not the only places to find diversity. Diversity can be found everywhere! To prove this, take a look at either your classroom or your school. In a classroom discussion, identify the diversity that you observe. If you are examining your classroom, you might focus on diversity among students. If you are examining your school, you might also observe diversity among teachers and classroom appearance. All observations about diversity should be done respectfully. Now hold a class discussion about how diversity improves your classroom or your school. What are the advantages of having diversity in your community?



DID YOU KNOW?



The heaviest woods in the world come from flowering trees that are called “ironwoods”. This unusual wood sinks in water!
<http://waynesword.palomar.edu>

DID YOU KNOW?



One of the world’s softest and lightest woods is from the American balsawood tree.
<http://waynesword.palomar.edu>