

# The Deciduous Forest Biome:

## Plant and Animal Adaptations

Plants and animals living in the Deciduous Forest Biome must be able to adapt to warm and somewhat hot summers and cold to freezing winters. They also need to adapt to the four distinct seasons (winter, spring, summer and fall) of this biome. There are also large amounts of rainfall and fertile soils in this biome.

### Plant Adaptations in the Deciduous Forest Biome

Plants and trees become dormant in order to prepare for the Deciduous Forest winters. Trees have thick bark to protect them in the cold winters. Deciduous trees drop their leaves prior to the winter which lets them store water/moisture and survive the cold winter. When the leaves are dropped, the trees and plants seal the open area to retain moisture. Most of the trees have very broad leaves to capture the sun's rays. In the fall, trees will cut off supplies of moisture to the leaves which causes the leaves to fall off.

### Examples of Plants found in the Deciduous Forest Biome:

There are five layers of plant growth in the Deciduous Forest Biome. The ground layer has moss and lichens, the next layer has herbs and shrubs, then the small tree layer which has an abundance of saplings and then the final layer contains the large deciduous trees. Maple Trees, Oak Trees, Hickory Trees, Beech Trees, Magnolia Ash, Black Cherry, Carpet Moss, Pecan, Lady Fern, Guelder Rose.

### Animal Adaptations in the Deciduous Forest Biome

Migration and hibernation are two adaptations that many of the Deciduous Forest animals have. Animals that hibernate will eat heavily before the winter and their coats will grow in quite thick to keep them warm through the winter hibernation period. Food storage is another adaptation some of the animals have; for instance chipmunks, some jays and squirrels gather nuts in the summer to store for the winter. The cold temperatures help to preserve the nuts and seeds. Animals use the forest plants and trees for both food, water and shelter. Most of the birds migrate south to avoid the colder winter. Insects and mammals reduce their activity so that they don't need as much food for energy. Animals like the deer have sharp hooves to be able to dig for food, they can also run quickly to escape their predators.

### Examples of Animals found in the Deciduous Forest Biome:

Marmots, Groundhogs, Black Bears, Beavers, Cougars, Opossums, Gray Squirrels, Raccoons, Wild Boar, Cardinals, Turkeys, Rat Snakes, Goshawks. Deer, Elk.