Discover AMAZONIA
Scotland's Indoor Tropical Rainforest

ONLINE LESSONS

Understory

Use the words at the bottom of the page to help you fill in the blanks.

The second layer up of the rainforest is called the _____ _____.

This layer is the damp, sheltered layer below the canopy layer and above the _____ _____. It is fairly dark in this layer and there is not much _____.

It is the perfect place for _____ to live, including bees, _____ _____, bullet ants, beetles and butterflies. Many insects are preyed upon by animals including _____ and geckos.

Many small _____ grow in the understory, like ginger and passionflower. Their flowers are usually _____ so insects can see them. Large-leafed shrubs that are suited to the warmth, shade and moisture also grow well here. These plants provide food and _____ for small animals that live in this layer. Because very little _____ reaches this layer, many of the plants have to grow larger leaves to reach the sunlight.

_____ is often used by the animals that live in the understory layer. It provides protection from _____ by helping them to blend into their surroundings. As there is a lot of competition for food, it helps animals that have to catch live food sneak up on unsuspecting prey without being seen until it is too late.

INSECTS | BRIGHT | CAMOUFLAGE | PLANTS | PREDATORS | STICK INSECTS | WIND | FOREST FLOOR | SUNSHINE | SHELTER | BIRDS | UNDERSTORY LAYER

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GIANT AFRICAN LAND SNAIL

Achatina fulica

DESCRIPTION

Giant African Land Snails have a brownish-green stripy shell that they use as a home and for protection. Their shells can reach a size of up to 20cm in length. They have a slimy body and a muscular foot for movement. They have 2 pairs of tentacles on the front of their bodies. The eyes are the longest pair and the shorter pair underneath are used for smelling and feeling its way around. The tentacles are extremely important to the snail.

DIET

Giant African Land Snails are herbivores so will eat any fruit or vegetables. It is also very important that they manage to feed on calcium rich foods which will help to keep their shell strong. In captivity they are given cuttlefish to eat which is full of calcium.

DISTRIBUTION

Giant African Land Snails are believed to originate from East Africa, found particularly in Kenya and Tanzania. They have since been introduced to Southern Ethiopia, Southern Somalia, Northern Mozambique, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles, Morocco and Ghana.

LIFE SPAN

Giant African Land Snails live for an average of 5-7 years. The snails are hermaphrodites which means they have both male and female reproductive organs. They lay eggs in batches of 100-400, with up to 1200 being laid in a year.

STATUS IN THE WILD: Giant African Land Snails are not endangered. They reproduce extremely easily and are farmed by Afrikaans for human consumption, to reduce the illegal bushmeat trade on endangered animals such as chimpanzees and gorillas.

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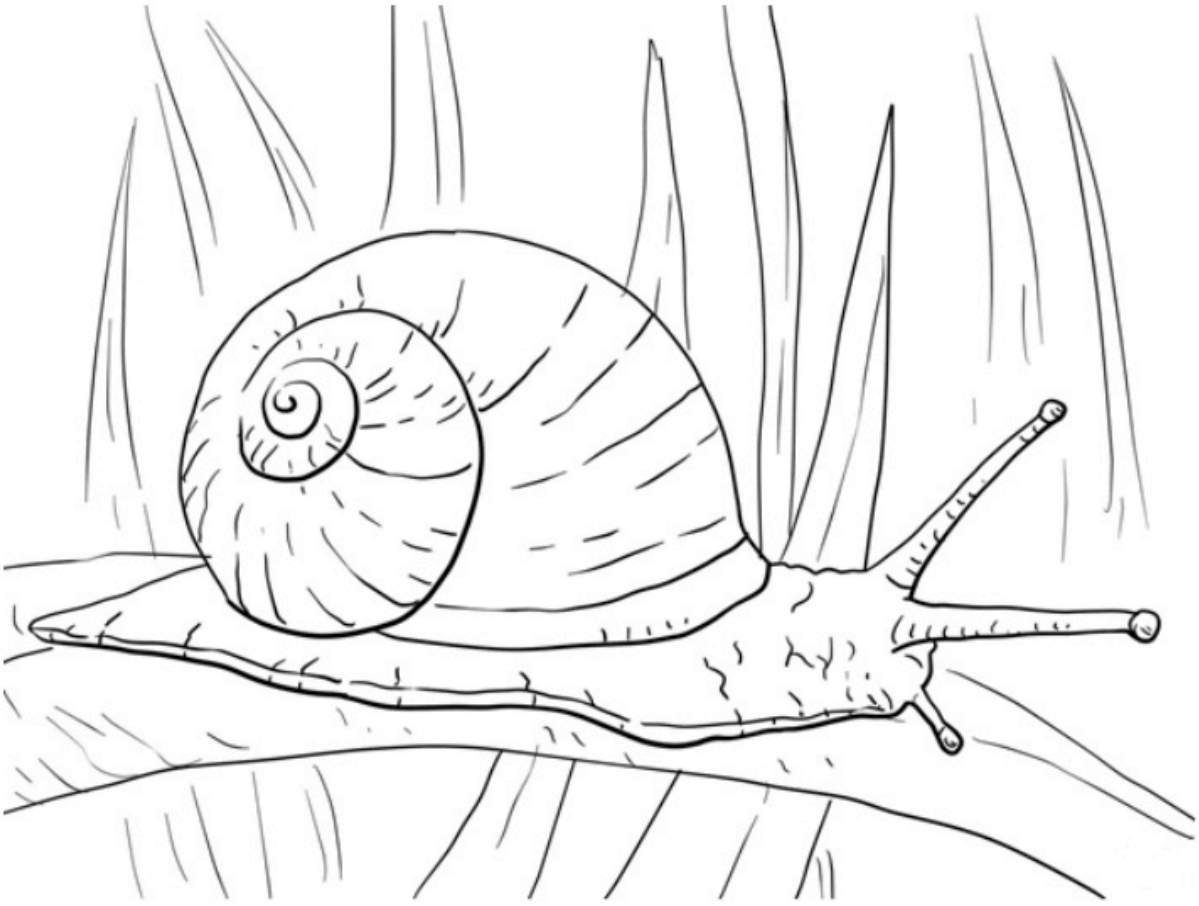
Today we learnt about giant African land snails!

Can you colour this snail in?



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SABAH THORNYSTICK INSECT

Aretaon asperrimus

DESCRIPTION

These stick insects are fairly broad and spiny, generally dark brown in colour with a cream coloured stripe running along their back. Females grow to approximately 8cm but the males are slightly smaller. As their name suggests, they mimic sticks and twigs extremely well.

DIET

They are herbivores and eat a variety of leaves.

DISTRIBUTION

Found throughout tropical forests of Sabah, Malaysian Borneo.

LIFE SPAN

Approximately 2 years.

STATUS IN THE WILD: Not evaluated.

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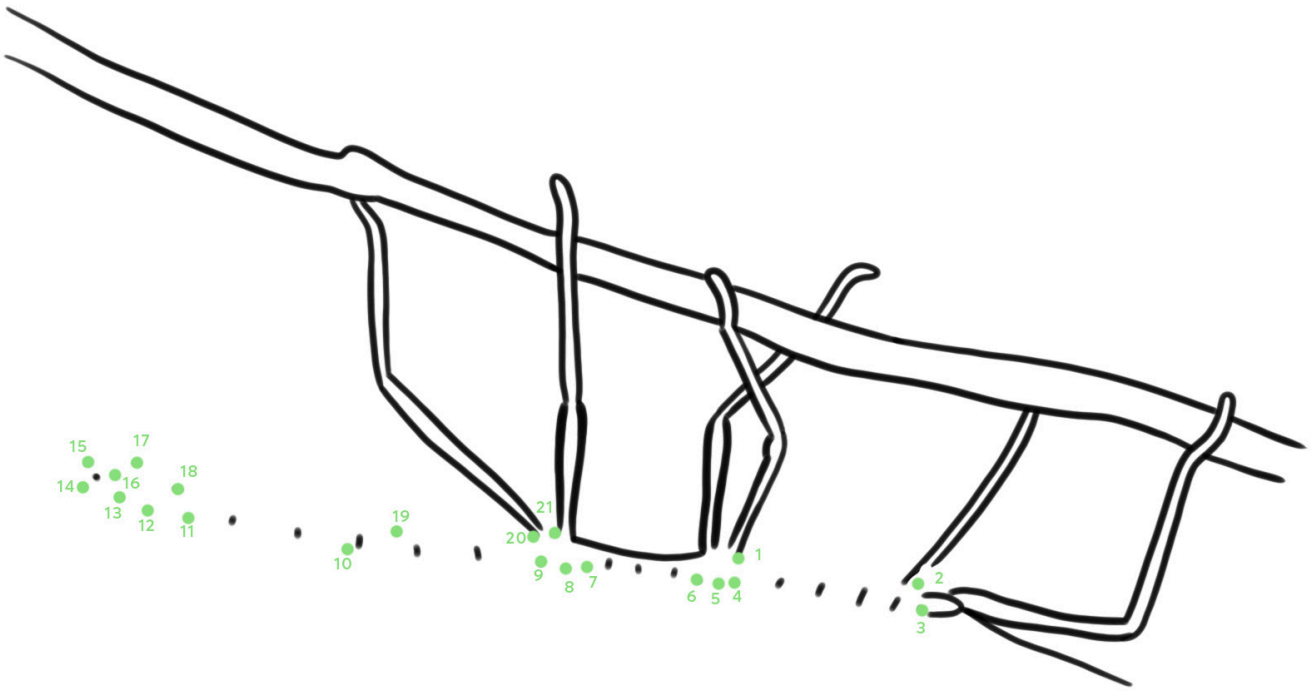
Understory

Today we learnt about the understory layer of the rainforest. Complete this dot-to-dot picture to reveal one of our rainforest creatures that will live there and then colour it in!



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Understory

Answer Sheet (Teachers info)

The second layer up of the rainforest is called the **UNDERSTORY LAYER**.

This layer is the damp, sheltered layer below the canopy layer and above the **FOREST FLOOR**. It is fairly dark in this layer and there is not much **WIND**.

It is the perfect place for **INSECTS** to live, including bees, **STICK INSECTS**, bullet ants, beetles and butterflies. Many insects are preyed upon by animals including **BIRDS** and geckos.

Many small **PLANTS** grow in the understory, like ginger and passionflower. Their flowers are usually **BRIGHT** so insects can see them. Large-leafed shrubs that are suited to the warmth, shade and moisture also grow well here. These plants provide food and **SHELTER** for small animals that live in this layer. Because very little **SUNSHINE** reaches this layer, many of the plants have to grow larger leaves to reach the sunlight.

CAMOUFLAGE is often used by the animals that live in the understory layer. It provides protection from **PREDATORS** by helping them to blend into their surroundings. As there is a lot of competition for food, it helps animals that have to catch live food sneak up on unsuspecting prey without being seen until it is too late.