ABOUT OUR NATIVE AND PLANTATION FORESTS

Around 16 per cent of Australia’s land area is covered by forest:

- almost 123 million hectares are NATIVE forests, and
- just over 2 million hectares are PLANTATION forests.

Most of Australia’s NATIVE forests are eucalypts (75 per cent), followed by acacias (8 per cent) and melaleucas (5 per cent).

About half of Australia’s plantation forests are exotic softwood (mainly Pinus radiata), while the other half are hardwood (mainly eucalypts).

**Activity 1 – About Our Native Forests**

Using the information in the following table, draw up a column graph showing the percentages of Australia’s main types of NATIVE forests:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of forests</th>
<th>Percentage making up Australia’s native forest area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eucalyptus</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acacia</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melaleuca</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Take a look at the Australian NATIVE forest distribution map and answer the following questions:

1. In which state or territory, can you find the majority of melaleuca forests?
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

2. Where in the Northern Territory can you find eucalypt forests (for example, ‘in the east, west, north, south, southwest...’)?
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

3. Where in Western Australia can you find eucalypt forests?
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_________________________________________________________________

4. Are there any acacia forests in Western Australia? If yes, where can you find them in that state?
____________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________

5. Which section of NSW has the least amount of forest (for example, the north, south, east, west, northwest etc)?
________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________

6. Which state or territory is mostly covered by forest?
___________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Activity 2 – About Our Plantation Forests

Take a look at the Australian PLANTATION forest map and answer the following questions:

1. Does Tasmania have mostly hardwood or softwood plantation forests?
____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

2. Are most of NSW’s hardwood plantation forests found along the state’s coastline or inland?
____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

3. Where in South Australia can you find softwood plantation forests?
____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

4. Are most of Queensland’s softwood plantation forests found along the state’s coastline or inland?
____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

5. Are there any softwood plantation forests in the Murray valley of NSW?
____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

6. Are there any plantation forests in the north of Western Australia? If yes, where can you find them?
____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
So what’s the difference between a hardwood and softwood tree?

Despite how they are named, a hardwood tree is not necessarily a harder (more dense) material than a softwood tree. For example, balsa wood is one of the lightest, least dense woods there is, and yet it’s a hardwood.

Working in pairs, search the Internet to find information about softwood and hardwood trees. Draw a picture of a typical hardwood and softwood tree below and list three characteristics of each underneath:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hardwood tree</th>
<th>Softwood tree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Characteristics

1.
2.
3.

Characteristics

1.
2.
3.
Activity 3 – Various Demands for Plantation and Native Forests


1. Name the three different types of forests, mentioned by Lisa Marty, CEO for the Victorian Association of Forest Industries, that provide wood for the local forest wood products industry.

2. According to the narrator, what type of tree is at the top of the ‘value’ chain and from which type of forest does it come?

3. According to Nathan Trushell, director of corporate affairs for VicForests, how many hectares of native forest can you find in the state of Victoria?

4. Around what percentage of Victoria’s native forest area is used for timber production?

5. According to the narrator, which type of forests – native or plantation – are the source for almost all of Australia’s hardwood products?

6. The narrator says typical rotation times for harvesting Australia’s native forests can stretch to more than how many years?

7. Nathan Trushell says there are advantages to growing the native forest trees more slowly. What are the two advantages he mentions?

8. Around how old is the bluegum plantation forest that the narrator and Nick walk through?

9. According to the narrator, what are the typical characteristics of the trees grown in a eucalypt plantation?

10. The narrator says the rotation time for eucalypt plantations is around how many years?
11. The trees in the eucalypt plantation forest are harvested to make what types of products?

___________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

12. What type of tree fibre is best for making fine white copy paper?

___________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

13. According to Lisa Marty, what two products are used in eucalypt plantations to control weeds and promote growth?

___________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

14. Do the trees in eucalypt plantations grow quickly or slowly?

___________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

15. How many years old is the pine plantation?

___________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

16. What are some of the products that are sourced from a pine plantation?

___________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

17. The ‘Green Triangle’ is found on the border of which two states?

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18. The Green Triangle produces most of Australia’s softwood or hardwood trees?

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19. According to Lisa Marty, what are the environmental benefits of wood compared to other products such as steel?

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