

12.5 What Loggers Want

Logging companies began moving into the Amazon basin during the 1960s. Loggers harvest trees from forests for use in wood products, which range from paper to fine furniture.

The Rainforest Is a Source of Valuable Hardwoods A great variety of trees grow throughout the Amazon rainforest. The most valuable tree species are the hardwood trees, such as mahogany and rosewood. Furniture manufacturers all over the world appreciate the beautiful wood from these trees.

Unfortunately, these valuable trees are scattered throughout the rainforest, making it difficult to find and cut only the hardwoods. Instead, loggers **clear-cut** whole patches of rainforest, which means that they cut down all of the trees in an area. After all of the trees have been removed, the loggers move on to another patch.

The logging companies argue that clear-cutting is the only way they can make money, but clear-cutting is also a major cause of deforestation. The larger the area that is stripped of its trees, the longer it takes for the rainforest to grow back.

Logging also leads to other types of development. Logging companies build roads deep into the rainforest so that they can transport logs by truck. Meanwhile, settlers who are looking for land follow these logging roads into the forest. Once there, the settlers claim land for farming and ranching.

We Need Trees to Help Brazil's Economy Many groups oppose the clear-cutting of the rainforest. Loggers reply that they are helping Brazil's economy grow by creating jobs for people in the **forestry** industry. In addition, logging provides wood for Brazil's furniture factories and paper mills.

Lumber companies also argue that they have made forestry a valuable **economic activity** for Brazil. In 2004, Brazil exported more than \$5 billion worth of wood. The money earned from these sales is helping Brazil to pay off its debts to other countries and is improving the living conditions of many of its citizens.

Loggers Lead the Way in Developing the Rainforest

In the 1960s, loggers began building dirt roads into the rainforest. Other groups began to develop land near these roads. In time, some logging roads became paved highways.

