



## Rain Forest Animals: Canopy

The canopy has trees that are up to 80 feet tall. The leaves on the canopy trees have pointed tips. These leaves are called “drip tips.” The shape of these leaves is very important to the ground. The rainfall is very hard in the rain forest. If the water were to land right on the ground without slowing down it would wash way all the good plant food and nutrients. Instead, the rain falls on the canopy trees and the water drips off slowly.

### TWO-TOED SLOTH

The sloth is a very slow moving mammal that lives in the tree branches. All sloths have three toes on their back feet. Only two-toed sloths have two toes on their front feet. Sloths hang in trees eating leaves. A sloth does not need to drink because they get all the water they need from the leaves they eat. A sloth finds its shelter in the canopy trees. They only leave the trees once a week to go to the bathroom on the forest floor. They even have their babies while hanging in the trees. Sloths take about one day to travel all the way down to the ground. Sloths move so slowly that algae grows on their fur. A sloth’s color helps it to camouflage in the leaves. Camouflage means to blend into your environment. Sloths are also very good swimmers. In the rainy season, the sloth climbs down from its tree to swim to another tree. Sloths are about 20 pounds and can be up to 30 inches long.

### BROMELIAD

The bromeliad has pointed leaves. The leaves form a cup or a bowl that can hold water.

When it rains, water drips down the tree trunk into the ‘tank’ of the bromeliad. Some bromeliads can hold up to 2 gallons of water. That is enough water to fill two jugs of milk. Bromeliads grow along branches and on tree trunks. The bromeliad has very bright colors. Some animals can even make their homes inside the leaves of a bromeliad.

### POISON DART FROG

Poison dart frogs are very brightly colored. These bright colors are warning signs. The colors tell other animals that these frogs have poison in them. Poison dart frogs come in many different colors like blue, green, yellow, red and many others. These frogs find their shelter in trees and leaves. They also find their shelter in plants such as the bromeliad. Poison dart frogs get their poison from the food they eat. When the dart frogs are stressed, they sweat out their poison. Some are not very poisonous, but others have enough poison to kill 10 grown men. Native people of the Amazon Rain Forest catch these frogs and put them near the fire to make them sweat. The natives roll their hunting darts or arrows in this poison. Then they go hunting for food. Poison dart frogs range in size from  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch to about 3 inches. These frogs eat small insects like termites, fruit flies and small crickets. Poison dart frogs get their water from rain that collects in the leaves of plants such as the bromeliad. The skin of a poison dart frog is very thin and these frogs can breathe and also drink water right through their skin.



### KEY TERMS

#### Bromeliad

A large rainforest plant that can hold gallons of water.

#### Camouflage

When an animal can blend into its environment because of its color.

#### Canopy

The layer of the rain forest that is directly below the emergent layer.

#### Poison Dart Frog

A brightly colored, poisonous frog that lives in the rain forest.

#### Sloth

A slow moving mammal from the tropical rain forest.



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