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# FAST FOOD FOOD



**TAKE CARE OF  
YOUR PLANET!**

**YOU CAN MAKE THE  
DIFFERENCE**

## **PALM OIL**

Shampoo, crisps, butter, cookies! Have you ever bought one of these items? They contain all the substance: palm oil. Any clue where and how it grows? It is almost unavoidable

that (part) of the palm oil in your product comes from palm plantations in Malaysia, the world largest producer with 47% of the supply. Saba (in Borneo) is the largest palm oil producer in Malaysia with 1.56 million

hectares planted. What was before 35% of rainforest area is now converted into these monocultures. They do not support the wildlife like rainforest did. As demand for biofuel is increasing, more forest is cleared.

# PALM OIL TREES



## Fast facts

Palm oil (*Elaeis guineensis*) is found in tropical countries it gets its fruits after 2 years from planting. The seeds are brown (see photo) and harvest. Then the seeds are crushed and the palm oil is extracted from the seeds. After a refining progress the oil is ready for consumption or for use in many products.

Everyone has heard, read or seen something about palm oil and the environmental impact it has. I did too in Malaysia. In this news letter you will read more about the environmental impacts and the cause for increased demand for palm oil. Making this the last news letter in Asia.

## Why is there increased demand?

Bio-diesel was introduced in Europe a decade ago. Usually as a mixture of palm oil and regular petrol. Although it sounds like a green solution, it now turned out into an eco-nightmare. The deforestation caused by making way for oil palm plantations is far more damaging for the climate than the benefits gained by switching to biofuel.

Rising demand for palm oil in Europe brought about the clearing of huge tracts of Southeast Asian rainforest and the overuse of chemical fertilizers there, such as in Borneo (Malaysia). Palm plantations are often created by draining and burning peatland, which sent huge amounts of carbon emissions into the atmosphere.

## The Environmental impacts

Palm oil production is often causing substantial and more often irreversible damage to the natural environment. The [impacts](#) are: [deforestation](#), habitat loss, loss of [critically](#)

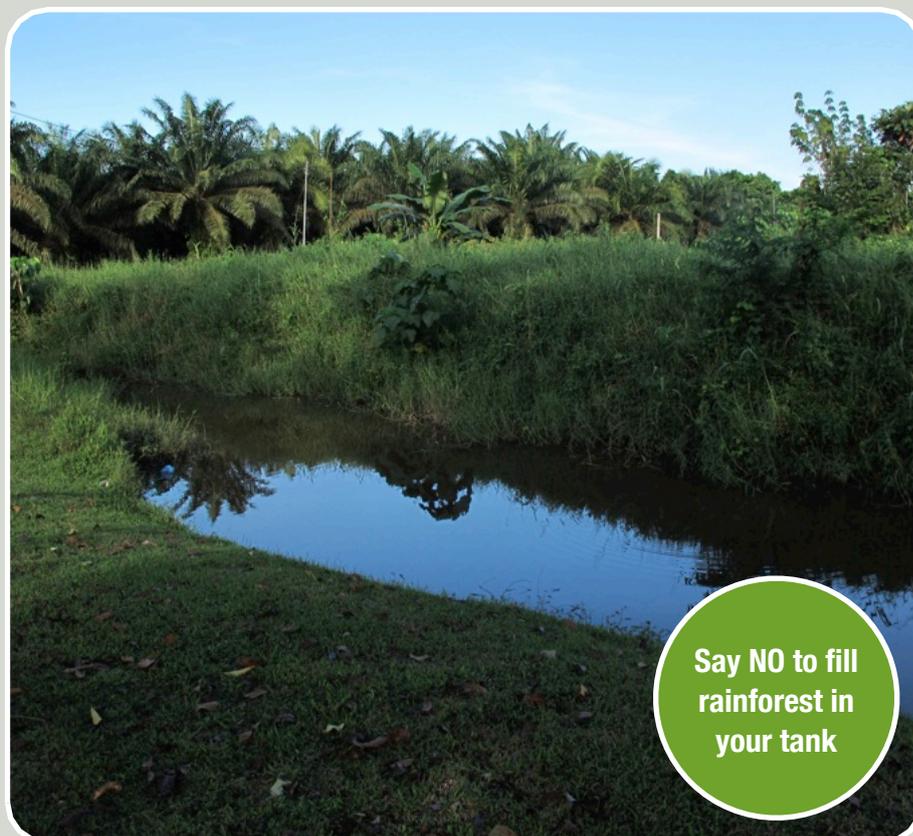
[endangered species](#) such as the [Orangutan](#) and [Sumatran Tiger](#), and a significant increase in [greenhouse gas](#) emissions. The emissions are exacerbated because many rainforests in Malaysia lie atop peat bogs that store great quantities of carbon. These are released when the forests are cut down and the bogs drained to make way for plantations.

## The solutions

The [Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil](#) (RSPO) is an organisation that promotes the growth and use of sustainable oil palm products. It has stakeholders of the palm oil supply chain, retailers, producers and environmental & social organisations. This [video](#) done by WWF gives a balance view of the industry and RSPO. So far RSPO has not changed or slowed the escalating situation and have been linked to [green-washing](#). In contrary Unilever committed to use only palm oil which is certified as sustainable by 2015.

## What you can do

Consumers can help reduce the demand for palm oil by avoiding products that contain it. Clearly, reducing demand would reduce the need to replace rainforests with oil palm plantations. Also active involvement by consumers could help curtail the destruction of rainforests and wildlife.



Say NO to fill  
rainforest in  
your tank