

BRAZILIAN DRY FOREST. AN ECOSYSTEM DEVELOPED OVER VAST LIMESTONE OCCURRENCES.

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So vast and important in biodiversity as Atlantic Forest, Brazilian Dry Forest has been by centuries a rich source of wood, food and natural medicines for local people. As a discontinuous seasonal woodland, with high deciduous trees, the forest originally covered an area larger than 300.000km², over a diversified topography, mostly hilly, sculptured on carbonate rocks. Only parts of the flood plains of Paranã, Palmas and São Francisco river, perform significant flat woodland areas. In the Brazilian plateau (Planalto Central Brasileiro) under savanna climate, acid soils are covered by grass and scrubland. Only the reddish fertile soils derived from carbonate was proper to dry forest. It extended throughout the states of Minas Gerais, Goiás and Bahia where the extraction of timber and charcoal, followed by an invasion of poacher and farmer's fire, has been reducing the forest to sparse wood spots and exposing the fertile soils to erosion. The transitions among diverse types of rock associated with limestone, promote a complex gradations of diverse ecosystems. The carefully analysis of geologic maps and satellite images, provide efficient information in searching sites for preserving and recovering these complex ecosystem, as so as offer good bases for economical evaluation.