Mangroves in Australia



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Mangroves in Australia

The mangrove communities of Australia are some of the most highly adaptive plant communities in the world. These plants live in an environment that is often engulfed with seawater. This environment is considered an arid environment due to the lack of fresh water. The plants of the mangrove community must develop several adaptations to deal with the environment. The environment these plants often inhabit is referred to as an intertidal zone. The intertidal zone is the transition between the salty ocean to the fresh water of the interior of the continent or island. To deal with the salty environment, mangrove plants have developed modified roots. In some species, the roots filter the incoming seawater. These modified roots also help to support the tree in the muddy substrate. The roots are considered a xeromorphic feature, a display feature that tends to conserve or retain water. These roots also provide oxygen intake by structures call pneumatophores. This ability is important in times of low soil aeration. The leaves are covered with a waxy cuticle that helps retain water. In some species, the leaves are responsible for salt secretion, while others store excess salt in leaves until they fall off the tree. The mangrove species also have modified reproductive structures. Most seeds develop while still attached to the parent tree. This enhances their chance of survival.

These seeds are also buoyant, which allows them to float to a less shady spot, away from the parent tree and start growing. Some species seeds shed their seed <u>coat</u> at particular water temperature and water <u>salinity</u>. Mangrove species produce different types of pollen for different plants. These different types of pollen ...

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...e land (Maguire 2000). Mangroves are endangered by human development. Conservation and management techniques need to become an important issue to preserve these unique and highly advance communities.

Summar

The mangroves are some of the most highly evolved plant communities in the world. These plants have overcome the harsh conditions from which they live in. One of the most obvious adaptations is the modified root structures that not only help support the plant in the muddy substrate, but may aid in oxygen intake in some species. Another notable adaptation that mangrove plants exhibit is their modified reproductive structures called propagules. These seeds actually begin development while still attached to the parent tree. Mangroves also provide important services such as filtering out toxins in outgoing streams that would normally damage coral reefs.

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