

Buchwald, Erik (2005): A hierarchical terminology for more or less natural forests...; Third Expert Meeting on Harmonizing Forest-related Definitions, Rome, 11-19. January, 2005

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First author: Buchwald, Erik

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Abstract

Existing terminologies since the late 1980's are reviewed gaps, inconsistencies and overlapping definitions. Many terms have been used very differently by different organisations with semi-natural forest being the worst example. It has variously been used for any kind of forest except exotic plantation. A new hierarchical terminology is proposed based on the work of many authors, persons and organizations working with this issue during the 1990's. Fourteen mutually exclusive levels of naturalness are delimited, defined, named and grouped, including virgin forest, old-growth, newly untouched forest, exploited natural forest, native plantation, exotic plantation and exotic self-sown forest. Consistent definitions for groups of levels and for qualifying features are also presented, e.g. for natural forest, native forest, exotic forest, primary forest, minimum-intervention forest, ancient woodland and grazed forest. The definition of natural forest follows UNCED, FAO, EU and the World Bank. For other terms official sources like FAO's Forest Resources Assessment have been followed as far as possible.

[biodiversity](#)

[forest type classification](#)

[naturalness - degradation](#)

[nature conservation](#)

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