


Clues and Causes

Ecologists, the scientists who study the connections between plants, animals, and the places they live, study changes in the populations of living things. They have identified several main reasons for plant losses, all caused by people.

Found only on the island of St. Helena, the St. Helena olive tree became extinct because of deforestation and overgrazing by cattle.





Deforestation, or the widespread practice of harvesting a forest without replanting, occurred frequently in early America. Today's deforestation more often occurs in places like tropical rainforests.

The number of people on Earth increases each year. People remove forests and grasslands for farming and for timber to meet increasing human needs. Deforestation and overgrazing by cattle cause major plant habitat loss.