



# **RAINFOR**

## **Field Manual**

### **for Plot Establishment and**

### **Remeasurement**

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## Introduction

The tropical forests of Amazonia constitute one of the most important ecosystems of the Earth. They account for 45% of the world's tropical forest, storing about one fifth of the carbon residing in terrestrial vegetation and annually processing about three times as much carbon through photosynthesis and respiration as humans release to the atmosphere through fossil fuel combustion. Amazonia also accounts for a large portion of global land surface evapotranspiration, and a significant fraction of the world's known species. Relatively small changes in the structure and/or function of these forests could therefore have global consequences for biodiversity, the carbon cycle and the rate of climate change.

RAINFOR (The Amazon Forest Inventory Network, Rede Amazônica de Inventários Florestais, Red Amazónica de Inventarios Forestales) is an attempt to utilise long-term permanent sample plots (PSPs) to monitor forest biomass and dynamics, and relate these observation to soil and climate across the Amazon forest region. Many of these plots were established in the past to investigate specific local ecological or forest management questions. However, by compiling and comparing these studies on a *regional* scale a whole new level of information becomes available: information that may provide vital insights into the mechanisms underlying the current responses of Amazonian ecosystems to climate and the possible future of Amazonia under global change scenarios.

The studies associated with RAINFOR have the following objectives:

1. Quantify long term changes in forest biomass and turnover to date.
2. Relate *current* forest structure, ecophysiology, biomass and dynamics to local climate and soil properties.
3. Understand the relationships between productivity, mortality and biomass.
4. Use relationships (i) to (iii) to understand how changes in climate may affect the biomass and productivity of the Amazon forest as a whole, and inform basin-scale models of carbon dynamics.
5. Examine variability of tree biodiversity across Amazonia, and its relationship to soils and climate.

One potential problem with the analysis of data from many different sources is the use of different methodologies at different sites. In addition, the impact of any changes in the methodology over time needs to be assessed before apparent temporal changes in dynamics can be considered robust. An important component of RAINFOR is to encourage discussion of methodological issues and the standardisation of forest inventory protocols. To help achieve this, this manual sets out the procedures for plot establishment and remeasurement that have been developed over the course of RAINFOR fieldwork in northern Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador 2001/2, and includes some minor refinements since them.

## **Plot establishment**

### **A. Location**

The pan-Amazon strategy within RAINFOR is to maintain sample forest plots across the edaphic range within each climatic zone and regional plot cluster (Malhi *et al.* 2002). New plots should be randomly located within local, geomorphological strata that satisfy certain logistical criteria. New plots should:

- be on reasonably homogenous soil parent material and soil type
- have adequate access
- have sufficient long term security from human disturbance
- have sufficient long term institutional support
- exclude areas affected by anthropogenic disturbance, unless understanding direct human impacts is an explicit or implicit aspect of the local monitoring purpose.

However, in most Amazonian research sites, accurate habitat maps are lacking, which prohibits complete stratified sampling at large scales. Similarly at local scales, identifying geomorphological strata is difficult because no accurate soil maps exist. Satellite images can help in identifying the range of vegetation types that might be found in any one area, but problems with the scale of resolution and lack of ground-truthing may limit the ability to accurately predict the exact distribution. Information from local residents and botanists who know the area can be very useful. Logistical constraints are also important: it is impractical to locate a plot greater than 1 hour from the field base, and it can be difficult to fit a 1 hectare plot into a forest that is dissected by tracks.

### **B. Position**

Within strata, plots should be randomly located, to avoid potential 'majestic forest' bias. If maps are available, plot location should be randomly assigned prior to going to the field. If not, in the field, there may be a tendency to start the plot in particularly 'good' forest. If maps are available, the position of the plot starting point can be randomised by locating it in a random direction at a random distance >50m (i.e. well out of sight), of the original, potentially 'biased' starting point.

### **C. Timing**

To minimise the errors caused by variation in stem water content between successive enumerations, plots should be measured over whole year intervals and at the time of year when there is least interannual variation in soil water availability. For plots in areas that experience severe interannual variation in rainfall due to El Niño events, the best time of year is during the wet season.

### **D. Orientation**

N/S and E/W directions for the principal axes of the plot are the most convenient but the eccentricities of the local strata may prevent this. The bearings of the main axis, and the latitude, longitude and elevation of the centre of the plot should be recorded. Note if true or magnetic north is used.

### **E. Shape**

It is important to maintain homogeneity within the plot, so the shape of the geomorphological strata is an important consideration. Square plots have lower edge:area ratio than rectangular plots, so have fewer problems with decisions concerning the presence of trees in or outside the plot at the edges. However, rectangular plots may be less disturbed by cut lines within the plot, less susceptible to any 'mature forest' bias, and the dynamics they record will be less influenced by single tree fall events. Both shapes are used within the RAINFOR network.

### **F. Size**

The coefficient of variation of basal area increases as sample plot size decreases below 0.4 ha in Costa Rica (Clark and Clark 2000). 1 ha is a standard size, greater than the scale of typical tree fall events, but sufficiently small to sample individual soil types. 20 x 20 m is a convenient subplot size.

### **G. Topography**

New plots within RAINFOR should be set up to sample one hectare of land surface, which requires some flexibility with bearings and distances when closing the final side of the plot. External and internal boundaries of the plot are measured in 20m segments. In some cases, a planar projection of 1 ha of forest has been used (Dallmeier 1992, Condit 1998) and slope corrections applied: the distance to be measured parallel to the ground for each segment is given by:

$$d = 20/\cos\theta$$

where  $\theta$  is the inclination of slope in degrees. Plots laid out in this way will always tend to include a greater surface area of land surface, and correction factors allowing comparison between plots on the basis of land surface area need to be calculated.

## **H. Visibility**

It must be possible to relocate plots, but any permanent markers used must not attract too much attention! Plastic stakes can be installed in each of the four corners of the plot, driven well into the ground, with approximately 10 cm showing above the ground. It may be convenient to also locate stakes every 20m around the plot edges, this is especially important if there is a serious intention to monitor the plot for long periods to reduce edge-associated measurement errors in trees recruitment.

## **I. Stringing the plot**

This works well with 4 people: 1 with compass, 1 to cut line, 1 to measure the distance and 1 to follow behind laying out the string. Stringing the base line of the plot and then carefully stringing each subplot is the most accurate method of delimiting the plot.

Any cutting should be kept to the absolute minimum - remember, any impacts can affect growth of trees in the plot and the long term recruitment of new individuals.

## **J. Tagging trees and lianas**

Tagging and measuring the tree stems can be done concurrently by three people. One person should work out the best order in which the stems should be tagged, and tag them, one measure, and one take notes and roughly map the plot.

Trees are included if greater than 50 % of the roots are inside the plot. Tree stems should be tagged systematically moving round each subplot with the last stem tagged in each subplot close the start point of the next subplot.

Knock in the nail at a slight downward angle, just far enough so that it penetrates the bark and is secure but leaving as much space as possible for the tree to grow without “eating” the tag. Tag at 1.60m, or exactly 30 cm above the POM, and consistently on the same side of the trees throughout the subplot. It is helpful to mark a line 30 cm on the hammer so that the hammer can be used to measure 30 cm above the POM to place the tag. In square, 100 x 100m plots it is useful to tag each successive line of subplots on a different side of the tree, as this helps identify where the internal lines of the plot are on

subsequent occasions. Iron nails are required for the trees with the hardest external wood (e.g., palms).

Note:

- Newly broken or deciduous trees can be completely leafless so check carefully: they are living and should be tagged as long as the cambium beneath the bark is live.
- Multiple-stemmed trees are recorded at the stem level. Tag **every stem** that is  $\geq 10$ cm diameter at 1.30m height. Each stem should have a unique tag number to ensure that any future data can be matched to the correct stem. Record which stems are from the same individual in the census notes comments (h=). If two stems of the same species are very close together, check the roots carefully to see if the stems in join below ground.
- Fallen trees should be checked carefully to see if they are still alive, as with standing trees. They should be tagged 1.60m from the tree base.
- Tag each liana stem that is  $\geq 10$ cm diameter at any point within 2.5m of the ground, even if  $< 10$ cm at 1.30m. CHECK CAREFULLY AS THEY CAN BE EASY TO MISS! Each climbing liana stem that meets this criterion AND is separately rooted counts as one individual plant (but check carefully to see that the point where the stem meets the ground is actually rooted and not simply covered by leaf litter). See detailed section (L) on liana measurement.

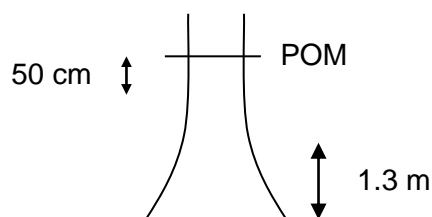
### ***K. Tree measurement***

Trees are recorded at the stem level. Please note, there are a series of standard codes to record tree stem condition when alive as well as mode of death. These standard codes must be used – please see <http://www.rainfor.org/en/manuals/in-the-field>, or the end of this document, for details.

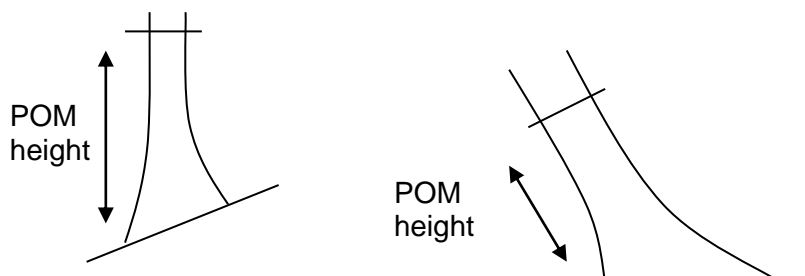
Measure at 1.3 m height wherever possible. **Note:** *IF 1.3 m IS NOT USED AS THE POINT OF MEASUREMENT (“POM”) IN ORDER TO AVOID DEFORMITIES OR BUTTRESS ROOTS, RECORD THE HEIGHT OF THE POM.* Use a pole with 1.3 m marked, pushed firmly into the leaf litter to the mineral soil next to the tree, to define POM (Swaine, et al. 1987, Condit 1998). Note that breast height is not the vertical height above the ground, but should be measured as the straight line distance along the trunk, even if it is leaning or bent. In plots where the trees are tagged at 1.6m height, the POM is 30cm below the tag unless noted otherwise.

The exact measurement point should be marked with chalk (white or yellow) by the measurer, and the location then painted with emulsion paint (yellow or red).

- **Climbers:** The tape is passed under any vines or roots on the stem and then is moved back and forth to clean the POM of loose bark and debris. Hemiepiphytes, or lianas that closely hug the stem should be lifted not cut. In rare cases where lianas or stranglers are firmly attached to the tree stem, the diameter can be estimated by holding the tape perpendicular to the stem at the POM, or using an optical method (see below).
- **Buttresses:** If the tree is buttressed at 1.3 m, measure stem 50 cm above the top of the buttress (Condit 1998). Record height of POM.



- **Deformities:** If the tree has a major stem deformity at 1.3 m height, then measure 2 cm below the deformity (Condit 1998). Record POM height.
- **Fluted trees:** Trees that are fluted for their entire length should be measured at 1.3 m.
- **Slopes and fallen or leaning trees:** Breast height is always calculated on the downhill side of the tree, and trees that are fallen or leaning are always measured at 1.3m length along the side of the stem closest to the ground. This procedure avoids confusion with the common situation when trees are both on slopes and leaning – trees usually lean downhill and these rules mean there is no confusion regarding the side of the tree used to measure the POM. On fallen trees it is difficult to define the base of the trunk accurately – therefore measure the tree 30 cm below the tag.



- **Stilt-rooted trees:** Stilt rooted individuals should be measured 50 cm above the highest stilt root and the POM recorded.

- **Resprouts:** On standing, but broken trees, or fallen individuals, the main stem and resprouts are measured at 1.3 m from the base of the stem. A resprouting individual is only included if the resprouts are greater than 1.3 m from the stem base.
- **Multiple stems:** All stems greater than 10 cm at 1.3 m are measured, painted, and recorded.
- **Large buttress trees:** Large buttress trees should be left by the measurement team and done separately later: it typically takes two people one day to measure the large trees in a plot. A ladder is essential to reach the POM of some large trees, and in some cases two ladders may be needed to ensure accurate measurement. If the POM cannot be reached, then diameter should be measured by a climber with a diameter tape; or, if impossible by a climber, then as a last option by digital camera. Measurement by relaskop is not recommended.

#### ***For digital camera measurements:***

In rare cases when the POM cannot be reached either by ladder or by a climber, a digital camera provides a reasonably accurate method for measuring the diameter of large trees. A photo is taken of a ruler or tape aligned at the POM. From each photo, the diameter can be measured in pixels, and the number of pixels per cm calculated. This method works best if a laptop computer is also available every evening to download the digital data and calculate diameter. This allows for a return visit to the tree the next day in case any uncertainties remain.

#### ***Record:***

- height of POM
- height of camera
- compass bearing from camera to tree
- horizontal distance from camera to the centre of the tree
- length of the reference scale
- photo number
- diameter estimate, as a check

Error is minimised by: 1) photographing a ruler or tape as long as the tree diameter. An old tape can be cut and attached to a palm frond or very straight branch or stretched between two poles; 2) keeping the angle from the camera to the POM is as shallow as possible. To achieve this, if a tripod is available, the camera can be placed at a greater distance and the photo taken with zoom (minimum 5 m,



recommended 10+m). 3) Digital camera measurements should be made at the same POM from a minimum of two different, perpendicular points due to asymmetric stems.

The maximum zoom possible should be used to ensure the reference scale can be read. Using a high ISO (e.g.  $\geq 800$ ) allows the photos to be taken without a tripod. The POM should be painted and can be painted by attaching a paintbrush horizontally to a long pole.

A correction should be applied for this optical method as it fractionally underestimate diameter (see Correction for Optical, below).

### **L. Liana measurement**

Lianas present special measurement challenges for long-term plot studies. We have developed a range of protocols to maximise long-term comparability across sites and through time at individual sites.

Selecting the point of measurement (POM) for lianas is particularly tricky, and has not been well standardised making comparisons among different research groups difficult. *Our protocol calls for each liana stem to be measured at three different points, to maximise comparability within the site for time-dependent analyses (growth, recruitment, mortality), across the whole RAINFOR dataset, and with other studies worldwide.*

We include any liana or hemi-epiphyte that reaches 10cm diameter at any point along the stem between 0 and 2.5m above the ground. 0 is defined as the last rooting point.

#### ***For lianas and hemiepiphytes, record the diameter measurements at three points:***

1. at 130cm *along the stem from the principal rooting point* (=“d1.3length” (D.Largo)),
2. at 130cm *vertically above the ground* (i.e., 30cm below the nail in plots where plants are tagged at 1.6m), (=“d1.3height” (D.Altura))
3. and ALSO at the widest point on the stem within 2.5m of the ground (= “dmax”), including any deformity.

Check carefully for the maximum diameter point – in lianas it is often close to the ground or a branching node where anomalous growth can be most marked. Describe the maximum diameter measurement point precisely in notes (e.g., ‘by ground’, ‘10cm above tag’ etc.).

Paint all POMs carefully with emulsion paint, just as with trees. Tags should be at a point measured 30 cm above the POM (*130 cm vertically above the ground*).

Some lianas are 'cabled' (e.g., some Malpighiaceae) with the cables progressively splitting as the liana ages and each cable thickens; in these cases it is difficult to measure the liana in a way to permit long-term estimation of radial growth increments. For these lianas, diameter is estimated by tightening the diameter tape around all adjacent cables originating from the same root base. Other lianas are clearly elliptic in cross-section (reaching extremes in some 'monkey-ladder' *Bauhinia* spp); these stems should be measured in two ways: conventionally (i.e. wrap the tape round the whole stem) and by twice measuring the linear distance of each of the maximum and minimum dimension and taking the geometric mean. Following these conventions, every liana that attains  $\geq 10.0$ cm  $d_{max}$  should be tagged and measured.

Further difficulties can be presented by deciding where one liana ends and another starts. Thus, lianas are sometimes connected to one another below ground but this can be hard to establish. Therefore, for ease of application we apply the criterion that any climbing stem that fully enters the mineral soil counts as an independent plant (= an "apparent genet"). If unsure, then tag the stem and comment that it may be the same as another stem. In cases where the liana plant branches, each branch that branches within 2.50m vertical distance from the ground and attains  $\geq 10.0$ cm  $d_{max}$  is measured (as with all trees that branch at  $\leq 1.30$ m). In practice it is extremely rare for a branching liana to have two or more branches  $\geq 10$ cm diameter (on average in Amazonia this occurs at a frequency of  $< 0.1$  per ha).

For each liana stem (or ascending branch if there are more than one), note the number of the tree in which tree(s) the liana crown is in and record the tree number whose crown is most heavily affected by the liana. The purpose of this is to generate simple and comparable estimates of liana/tree interactions (e.g., estimate the extent to which liana infestation may enhance the probability of tree death). If the host tree is outside the plot it will not have a number: in these cases the tree diameter should be measured directly (tape) or visually (Relaskop or digital camera method).

### **M. Data recording**

All data should be recorded using the 'Field sheet template for new plots (printable) **Metadata/Trees/Liana**' template which can be downloaded from <http://www.rainfor.org/en/manuals/in-the-field>. In summary, the following details should be recorded:

#### **Plot:**

A map of the plot should be drawn and clearly labelled to include all of the following:

- Orientation of the plot / direction of North (0 degrees)
- Compass bearings of plot edges

- Plot dimensions (m)
- GPS measurements at 4 corners of the plot: latitude, longitude and altitude
- Subplot layout
- Tree xy origin(s) and specify if recorded at plot or subplot level

The fieldsheet metadata template can be found at <http://www.rainfor.org/en/manuals/in-the-field> and at the end of this document (appendix 5). It illustrates the recommended standard plot layout, and prompts for the required metadata. Other plot specific data to record includes:

- Local landmarks to assist plot relocation

### **Trees: for each stem**

- subplot number
- estimated X and Y co-ordinates from bottom left-hand corner of plot (can be measured precisely using laser rangefinder)
- Tag
- Family and species name
- Diameter in mm (D)
- POM, if different from 1.3
- ladder, or Relaskop/digital camera/estimate if used.
- Alive / mode of death status (see Appendix 1 for codes)
- Height broken at (if broken)
- Stem grouping: for multiple stemmed trees- which stems belong to the same individual

Additional measurements of liana canopy infestation of trees (LI), canopy crown illumination (CI) and crown formation (CF) are also recommended. Protocols for these are available at <http://www.rainfor.org/en/manuals/in-the-field>, and at the end of this document.

### **Lianas:**

- subplot number
- estimated X and Y co-ordinates from bottom left-hand corner of plot (can be measured precisely using laser rangefinder)
- Tag
- Family and species name
- Diameter (mm) at 1.3 m along the stem (D.Largo)
- Diameter (mm) at 1.3 m vertical height (D.Altura)
- Max. diameter at any point below 2.5 m (D.Max)

- Alive / mode of death status (see Appendix 4 for codes).
- Tree stem(s) that liana canopy is in
- Tree stem most heavily affected by the liana canopy

### **Sub-plot**

- Sketch map of tree locations
- Slopes of subplot boundaries
- Soil texture and drainage

### **N. Tree bole length and total tree height**

In addition, tree heights should be measured, to establish plot level diameter/height relationships for accurate modelling of tree-by-tree volumes for each plot, and test whether tree shape differs between stands in different environmental conditions. The aim is to characterise the 'ideal' height/diameter curve as determined by climatic and edaphic conditions and not confused by the influence of damaged trees. Ideally, every tree stem in the plot should have its total height measured. In practice this may not be possible due to time restrictions. If this is the case the following procedure is recommended:

Excluding trees coded as leaning, rotten, broken, forked below 5m, fallen or resprouted, randomly select from the plot fieldsheets:

- 10 individuals, 10-20 cm dbh
- 10 individuals, 20-30 cm dbh
- 10 individuals, 30-50 cm dbh
- 10 individuals greater than 50 cm dbh.

Measurements should be made by laser hypsometer ideally, if not available then manual trigonometric methods are acceptable. Record the method used.

From a suitable viewpoint, (angles of approx. 45° to the first branch are ideal as they minimise the error from any inaccuracy in measuring the angle):

- the angle to the base of the first main branch (a). A main branch is defined as one greater than 5 cm diameter, with leaves.
- the horizontal distance from this point to the centre of the tree (x)
- the angle to the base of the stem (b).

$$\text{Bole height} = x (\tan(a) + \tan(b)).$$

For measurement of total tree height, '(a)' should be substituted by the angle to the top of the crown. (Note that only total tree stem height (to top of the crown) should be uploaded to ForestPlots.net).

If in the field, a tree is found to be unsuitable (impossible to get a suitable viewpoint, for example), then the nearest stem in the correct size class should be used.

### **O. Wood density measurements**

A rapid approach to assessing stand-level wood density has also been developed. This variable is necessary to achieve greater accuracy in measurements of biomass than those based solely on plot basal area, and can also be used as a functional measure of forest species composition. Measurements of branch wood density in the field provide information on (usually non-timber) species that have not previously been studied.

From branches cut down from the crown for botanical collection or leaf nutrient analysis collect 10 cm long samples of at least 1.5 cm diameter and store the sample in plastic bags. In the evening measure the maximum and minimum diameter of each end of the sample measured to 0.1 mm using calipers. When measurements are not possible directly after sampling, 'fresh' volume is measured following rehydration of the samples in water overnight. Dry these samples in air in the field (fungus will grow if they are kept in plastic bags). Dry the samples overnight in a herbarium drier. Density is calculated as dry weight over fresh volume. Record sample mass to 0.01 g.

### **P. Botanical collection**

To enable among-site and longitudinal within-site comparisons of floristic pattern and change requires planning, investment, and long-term involvement of botanists: botanical collection, identification, and specimen curation are specialised and time-consuming processes. For new plots, all morphospecies that cannot be identified to species in the field with 100% confidence need to be collected. Samples need to be pressed and transported to the relevant herbarium for subsequent identification. Duplicate stems of morphospecies should be identified in the field to avoid unnecessary collections being made: a single collection of each morphospecies per plot is sufficient, if other stems can be matched with 100% confidence to that morphospecies in the field. The initials of the collector (3 initials) and collection number should be recorded (e.g. AMM17893) in the row of the tree that was collected. Other stems that have been identified in the field as the same morphospecies or species as other trees which have been collected should be related to the reference voucher by placing the collection number of the reference voucher in the row for that tree, with an '=' sign (i.e. =AMM17893).

**Q. Suggested timing and personnel for a 1-ha new plot**

*Locating and stringing a plot: 3-4 people, 2 days*

*Tree tagging, painting, mapping and measurement: 4 people, 3 days*

*Large trees and tree heights: 2 people, 1 ½ days*

*Topography: 2 people, ½ day*

*Botanical collection: 2-3 people, 10 days [assuming median Amazon alpha-diversity, 150 species per ha]*

*Total ~48 person-day*

Additional time may need to be allocated for significant rain delays, breaks for field-team rest and recreation, and unforeseen circumstances. Botanical collection-times are very variable, being sensitive to the difficulty (number of species), weather conditions, and the physical skills and technical knowledge of the team.

## **Plot Remeasurement**

### **A. Stringing**

For relocating a previously established plot, run string along all the outer edges of the plot, using the bearings and the location of previously tagged trees to help define the plot edge and, where available, any edge stakes. This is quite straightforward where the understorey is clear and most trees still have their tags, but is time-consuming where many trees have lost their tags and/or the plot edge crosses a tree-fall. Using a previous hand-drawn map of the trees, if available, can help. Recorded compass bearings for plot edges are obviously helpful too but beware: small deviations in a bearing can result in incorrect exclusion or inclusion of large numbers of trees growing close to the plot edges. If you do follow a bearing, always check that the string is not excluding any previously tagged trees or including any large trees that obviously have never been tagged. Run string along each subplot edge, to follow the old number sequences.

### **B. Tree and liana measurement**

One person takes notes, using waterproof paper pre-printed with plot tree information. The note-taker should use any existing map of tree positions, if one is available. Hand-drawn maps are not precise but should be good enough to work out where trees should be - and therefore where to search for them if the measurement team does not locate them.

The same measurement protocols as previously described for plot establishment should be used. When remeasuring tree stems, if the diameter (mm) needs to be measured at a new POM due to deformity or anticipated buttress creeping,  $D$  is the diameter at the new POM and  $D_{POMtminus1}$  is the diameter measurement at the previous POM. Record (and paint) the new POM height. Discard low POMs as buttress extends over them with time. This procedure ensures that there is always a consistent, non-buttressed measurement of diameter growth.

All plot, tree and liana re-measurement data should be recorded using the fieldsheets downloaded from ForestPlots.net. Instructions for downloading fieldsheets for an existing plot can be found in section 5.15 of the ForestPlots.net manual, also available as a mini video tutorial 'Preparing a field sheet' at <http://www.forestplots.net/en/using-forestplots/in-the-field>





### C. Dealing with buttressed trees

Buttresses and other deformities require careful siting of points of measurement (POMs), and owing to tree growth these POMs may need to be changed. We have developed field approaches aiming to help obtain unbiased, above-buttress, estimates of plot basal area and growth. The approach used depends on whether previous measurements were ‘good’ or ‘bad’. **The field team must make a clear decision and record this on the field sheets.** If the top of buttress has grown within 30 cm of the marked POM, in addition to measuring at previous POM, measure diameter 50 cm above the previous POM (or 50cm above the top of the buttress if already affected), paint and record the new POM. Discard low POMs to ensure there is always a consistent, non-buttressed measurement of diameter growth.

#### Field POM Change Guide

Type of POM Change	Previous measurement	Current measurement	Field protocol	D	DPOMtminus1	Field Sheet Comments
<u>Non-buttress POM Change:</u>	‘Good’: above buttress & POM recorded	affected by irregular stem form, damage to trunk, etc	<u>two</u> measures: i) at previous POM (DPOMtminus1 written in comments); ii) above deformity (D); paint and record new POM	D@(new)POM above damage/deformity	D@ previous POM	write "previously D@POM ( <u>irregular stem, damaged stem, etc.</u> )"
<u>Buttress POM Change 1:</u>	‘Good’: above buttress & POM recorded	current measure ‘Good’, but close to buttress (< 50 cm)	<u>two</u> measures: i) at previous POM (DPOMtminus1 written in comments); ii) <b>above buttress</b> at new POM (D); paint and record new POM	D@(new)POM above buttress	D@ previous POM	write "previously D@POM (above buttress) "
<u>Buttress POM change 2:</u>	‘Good’: above buttress & POM recorded	POM affected by buttress	<u>one</u> measure: <b>above buttress</b> (D); paint and record new POM	D@(new)POM above buttress	Estimated post-field	write "previous POM affected by buttress"
<u>Buttress POM change 3:</u>	‘Poor’: around buttress, or diameter estimated at known POM	POM affected by buttress	<u>one</u> measure: <b>above buttress</b> (D); paint and record new POM	D@(new)POM above buttress	Estimated post-field	write "previous POM affected by buttress. Previous census also affected?"
<u>Unknown POM change:</u>	POM not recorded or diameter estimated	OK	<u>one</u> measure: <b>above buttress (D)</b> ; paint and record new POM	D@(new)POM above buttress		write "unknown previous POM" and/or "DBH previously estimated"

Note: Field sheet notation system:

(O) circle measurements to check

(V/OK) tick/OK to indicate previous or current measurement OK

(X) Cross out measurement to indicate unreliable previous measurement

(?) Questionable previous measurement

Further suggestions and analyses on how to deal with the difficult issue of deriving accurate long-term growth estimates from trees whose POM is changed are discussed in recent literature (e.g., Talbot et al. 2014)

#### **D. Mortality and recruitment**

For dead tree stems, the mode of death should be recorded – fallen, broken, standing (i.e. with branches intact).

There are a special set of RAINFOR codes for tree stem status (alive + dead). See Appendix 1.

When recensusing, two people should do the tree measurements and carry nails, tags, and a hammer, and tag new recruits as they are found. Give them the number of the nearest tagged tree and add A, B etc, to keep the spatial pattern. Mark unidentified new trees (recruits) clearly with bright pink or orange tape for later collecting.

#### **E. Dealing with potential errors**

*Think about the measures as you record them:* The plot data sheets provide a lot of information about individual trees, i.e. size, taxon, and previous ‘traumas’ (e.g., ‘live, broken’) which may explain its disappearance since. The historical measurement progression gives the note-taker further insights which can be very useful (e.g. it helps to flag immediately if the new measurement may be error – can unusually large or negative changes in diameter be explained by recent changes to the trees’ local environment or condition?). In the field, if the measure called out shows an increase above the long-term trend, or a decrease, the note-taker should ask the measurer to remeasure immediately to check. The person taking notes should check carefully that no trees have been missed, particularly fallen trees. When recensusing try to follow spatial sequence of old numbers if possible: it makes it easier to work out the old numbers of trees who have lost their tags.

#### **F. Suggested timing and personnel requirements**

##### ***Recensusing 1-ha plot***

*Locating and stringing the plot: 3 people, 0.5 day*

*Tree tagging, painting and measurement: 4 people, 2 days*

*Large trees: 2 people, 1 day*

*Botanical collection of new recruits: 1-2 people, 1 day (less in low diversity forests)*

*Total ~13 person-day*

Additional time may need to be allocated for significant rain delays, breaks for field-team rest and recreation, and unforeseen circumstances. Botanical collection-times are very variable, being sensitive to the difficulty (number of species), weather conditions, and the physical skills and technical knowledge of the team.

### **G. Data processing**

Data collected during the RAINFOR field campaigns is uploaded to ForestPlots.net ([www.forestplots.net](http://www.forestplots.net)). Please follow the protocol described in the “Post-field data handling” section of the ForestPlots.net manual to prepare your data for upload.

After the data has been uploaded, follow the quality control protocol. The quality control protocol includes information on how to deal with data processing problems like “unlikely recruits” (large trees that “appear” in the plot), missing census information of trees and “abnormal growth”.

In all cases, a record should be kept of the original measurement, the presumed error, and any correction made. The ForestPlots.net database includes functionality for recording all such data management (see ForestPlots.net manual).

#### ***Plot data organisation, one Excel file per plot***

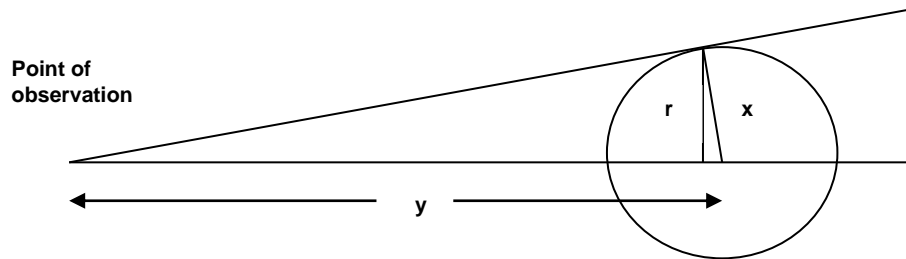
**Worksheets** 3 worksheets per file, giving tree, liana and site details

**Columns** Tree and liana sheets contain information on plot and stem number, taxonomy, stem grouping, all diameter measurements, point of measurement (POM), and flags 1 to 4 (appendices 1 and 4). Where two diameter measurements were made on a single stem, due to buttress growth above previous POM, the diameter at the new POM is recorded in the usual column (D), diameter at the previous POM is recorded in a separate column DPOMtminus1. Census notes column includes observations useful in the field (leaning, fluted etc).

**Rows** One row per stem. Each stem of multiple stemmed individuals occupies one row.

### H. Correction for optical digital camera measurements of tree diameter

Optical measurements of tree diameter underestimate true diameter:



where  $x$  = true radius,  $r$  = measured radius and  $y$  = distance from point of observation to point of measurement of tree ( $= a / \cos\alpha$ , where  $a$  is the horizontal distance to centre of tree, and  $\alpha$  = angle of elevation from observation point, to point of measurement on the tree). Assuming the cross-section of the trunk is circular along the line of sight, the true radius is given by:

$$x = (0.5 * (y^2 - (y^4 - 4r^2y^2)^{1/2}))^{1/2}$$

Typically, the error is approximately 0.5 % of the measured diameter. It increases with tree size and decreases with larger distances between the tree and the point of observation.

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## **Appendix 1 - RAINFOR Fieldwork Database Codes for Trees**

### **FLAG 1: ALIVE STATUS (If the tree stem is dead, write “0” in this column)**

- a=** Alive normal, should be used by itself unless a tree is a recruit (n) or multi-stemmed (h) individual.
- b=** Alive, broken stem/top & resprouting, or at least live phloem/xylem. Write in the comments column at what height the stem is broken.
- c=** Alive, leaning by  $\geq 10\%$ . The leaning code cannot be used with the fallen code 'd'.
- d=** Alive, fallen (e.g. on ground)
- e=** Alive, tree fluted or/fenestrated
- f=** Alive, hollow
- g=** Alive, rotten and or presence of bracket fungus
- h=** Multiple stemmed individual. Each stem  $>99\text{mm}$  gets a number. Always use with another code - e.g. if a tree is broken and with multiple stems use 'bh'.
- i=** Alive, no leaves, few leaves
- j=** Alive, burnt
- k=** Alive, snapped  $< 1.3\text{m}$  (therefore the diameter at 1.3m is 0mm)
- l=** Alive, has liana  $\geq 10\text{cm}$  diameter on stem or in canopy
- m=** Alive, covered by lianas. Use where canopy is at least 50% covered by lianas, even if no individual liana reaches 10cm diameter.
- n=** Alive, new recruit. Always use with another code- e.g. if a stem is normal and new then use the code 'an', if a stem is broken and a new recruit the code is 'bn'.
- o=** Alive, lightning damage
- p=** Alive, cut
- q=** Alive, peeling bark (bark loose/flaking)
- s=** Alive, has a strangler
- w=** Alive, has wound and/or cambium exposed
- x=** Alive, elephant damage
- y=** Alive, termite damage
- z=** Alive, declining productivity (nearing death)

**Note:** *Tree Alive Status Codes* can be used together in any combination. The only exceptions are codes 'a', 'c' and 'd'. Please read the notes when using these codes!  
If 'strangler', write it in the **comments column**.

### **FLAG 2: MODE OF DEATH (If the tree stem is alive, write “1” in this column)**

All dead trees have two or three letter codes.

#### **1) Physical mechanism of mortality (How the tree stem died)**

- a=** Standing
- b=** Broken (snapped trunk)
- c=** Uprooted (root tip-up)
- d=** Standing or broken, probably standing (not uprooted)
- e=** Standing or broken, probably broken (not uprooted)
- f=** Standing or broken (not uprooted)
- g=** Broken or uprooted, probably uprooted
- h=** Broken or uprooted, probably broken
- i=** Broken or uprooted (not standing)
- k=** Vanished (found location, tree looked for but not found)
- l=** Presumed dead (location of tree not found e.g. problems, poor maps, etc.)
- m=** Unknown

#### **2) Number of trees in Mortality event**

- p=** Died alone
- q=** One of multiple deaths
- r=** Unknown

Developed in 2005-2007 by RAINFOR participants, revised in 2014 and 2021.  
(*Oliver Phillips, Tim Baker, Kuo-Jung Chao, Eliana Jimenez, Simon Lewis, Jon Lloyd, Julie Peacock, Gabriela Lopez-Gonzalez, Ted Feldpausch*)

**FLAG 2: MODE OF DEATH (continued...)****3) Killed or killer process**

- j= Anthropogenic
- n= Burnt
- o= Lightning
- s= Unknown whether killed or killed
- t= Killer of at least one other tree >10cm DBH
- u= Killed, no more information
- v= Killed by tree that died broken
- w= Killed by another tree that uprooted
- x= Killed by branches from dead standing tree
- y= Killed by branches fallen from living tree
- z= Killed by strangler
- 2= Killed by liana
- 3= Killed by strangler / liana weight [tree died broken or fallen]
- 4= Killed by strangler / liana competition [tree died standing]
- 5= Killed by elephant
- 6= Killed by termites
- 7= Killed by wind

**Note:** Select one code from each category. For example a dead tree that is standing, died alone and was killed by lightning would be 'apo'.

For multiple deaths the numbers of trees that died should be recorded and written in the comments column.

For broken trees the height at which the breakage occurred should be recorded in the comments column.

**FLAG 3: MEASUREMENT TECHNIQUE**

- 0= Normal measurement with a tape measure
- 1= Relascope
- 2= Digital camera
- 3= Estimate
- 4= Ladder, with diameter tape
- 5= Unknown
- 6= Dendrometer

**FLAG 4: POST-FIELD DATA MANAGEMENT**

- 0= No retrospective modification
- 1= Extrapolated from previous measurements forwards or final measurement backwards
- 2= Corrected expected typographical error
- 3= Interpolated (two good measurements either side of a problem measurement)
- 4= Estimated using median growth rates for that size class
- 6= The POM was changed because it had to be, good measurement before
- 7= Zero growth rate assumed
- 8= Another transformation, see notes/ not clear what was done

Note: Only one measurement technique and one data post-field data management (Flag 4) code should be selected for each stem, except when a tree has POM change, then write "6" for POM change together with another code for Data Management, e.g. "60".

**FLAG 5: HEIGHT MEASUREMENT TECHNIQUE**

Total Tree Height - Height should be recorded in meters and the height measurement code recorded in the Flag 5 column. If height was not measured, leave the height column and Flag 5 empty.

- 1= Estimated by eye.
- 2= Manually by trigonometry (clinometer).
- 3= Manually by trigonometry (clinometer), carefully trained.
- 4= Laser or ultrasonic distance to tree, electronic tilt sensor for angle.
- 5= Laser hypsometer from directly below crown, "last return" filter function.
- 6= Directly (e.g. climbing, cutting, adjacent tower).

**Appendix 2 - KEY to the Mode of Tree Death (Kuo-Jung Chao)**

- 1A. Standing with fine dead branches (< 10 cm), and no resprouts in the main trunk..... *died standing*  
(code: a)
- 1B. Standing stump without fine dead branches and with main trunk on the ground ..... **2**
  - 2a. Stump with dead resprout(s) < 5 cm ..... *died broken* (code: b,  
also note broken height by m)
  - 2b. Stump without resprouts or with dead resprout(s) > 5 cm ..... **3**
    - 3a. Trunks scattered around with no specific coherent direction ..... *died standing (then  
broken afterward)* (code: a)
    - 3b. Only with one main trunk on the ground, or a few but with one coherent direction ..... **4**
      - 4a. Vegetation damage noticeable and the fallen trunk with intact dead fine / crown branches (< 10 cm, not  
resprouts), the trunk on the ground is still hard, and/or the standing stump with jagged end  
..... *died broken* (code: b,  
also note broken height by m)
      - 4b. Vegetation damage not noticeable and the fallen trunk without fine / crown branches, the fallen trunk  
with fungi perpendicular to the ground, and/or the end of the stump is somewhat smooth/ soft  
..... *died standing (then  
broken afterward)* (code: a)
- 1C. Fallen trunk on the ground without obvious stump ..... **2**
  - 2a Root bole partially or wholly raised ('tip-up') and with some soil exposed ..... *died uprooted* (code c)
  - 2a Root bole not raised ..... **3**
    - 3a Vegetation damage noticeable, with fine branches, and/or with resprout(s) ..... *broken at 0 m* (code b,  
note broken height at 0 m)
    - 3b Vegetation damage not noticeable, roots in advanced decomposition stage, and/or with fungi perpendicular to  
the ground ..... *died standing, roots  
decomposed, and then fallen (e.g., palm trees)* (code: a)

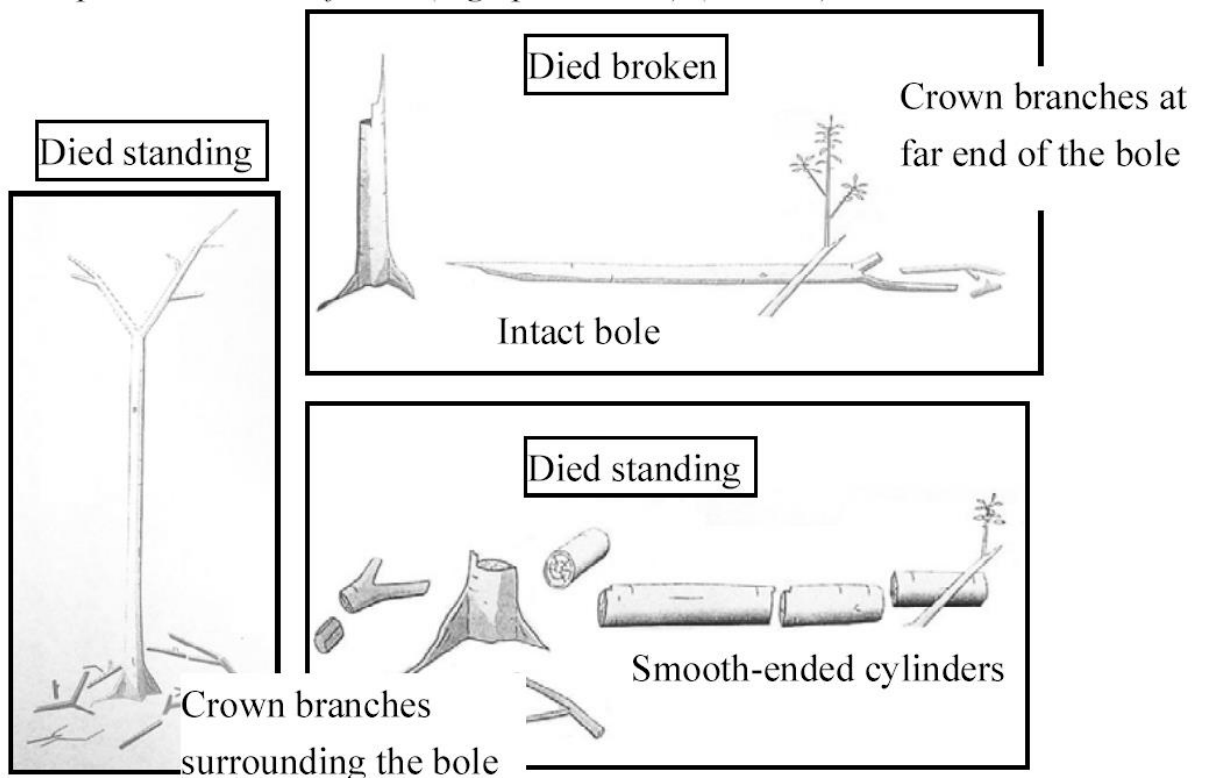


Figure from Gale (1997)



**Appendix 3 - RAINFOR Fieldwork Database Codes for Liana Infestation (LI), Crown Illumination (CI) and Crown Formation (CF) Index**



- Liana Infestation:**
- 0 No lianas in crown
  - 1 1-25% of crown covered by lianas leaves
  - 2 >25-50% of crown covered
  - 3 >50-75% of crown covered
  - 4 >75% of crown covered

**Crown Formation Index**

- Crown Formation:**
- 0 Intact crown, not broken
  - 1 1-25% of the crown broken
  - 2 >25-50% of the crown broken
  - 3 >50-75% of the crown broken
  - 4 >75% of the crown broken

## Crown Illumination Index Definition – English version

The RAINFOR network uses a modified form of the Dawkins index (Dawkins 1958), as in Synnott (1979) and Moravie (1999).

### Index Definition

- 5 Crown completely exposed to vertical and lateral light in a 45 degree curve, e.g. emergent
- 4 Crown completely exposed to vertical light, but lateral light blocked within some or all of the 90 degree inverted cone encompassing the crown
- 3b High vertical illumination (>50%)
- 3a Some vertical light (<50% of the vertical projection of the crown is exposed to vertical light)
- 2c High lateral light
- 2b Medium lateral light
- 2a Low lateral light
- 1 No direct light (crown is not lit directly vertically or laterally)

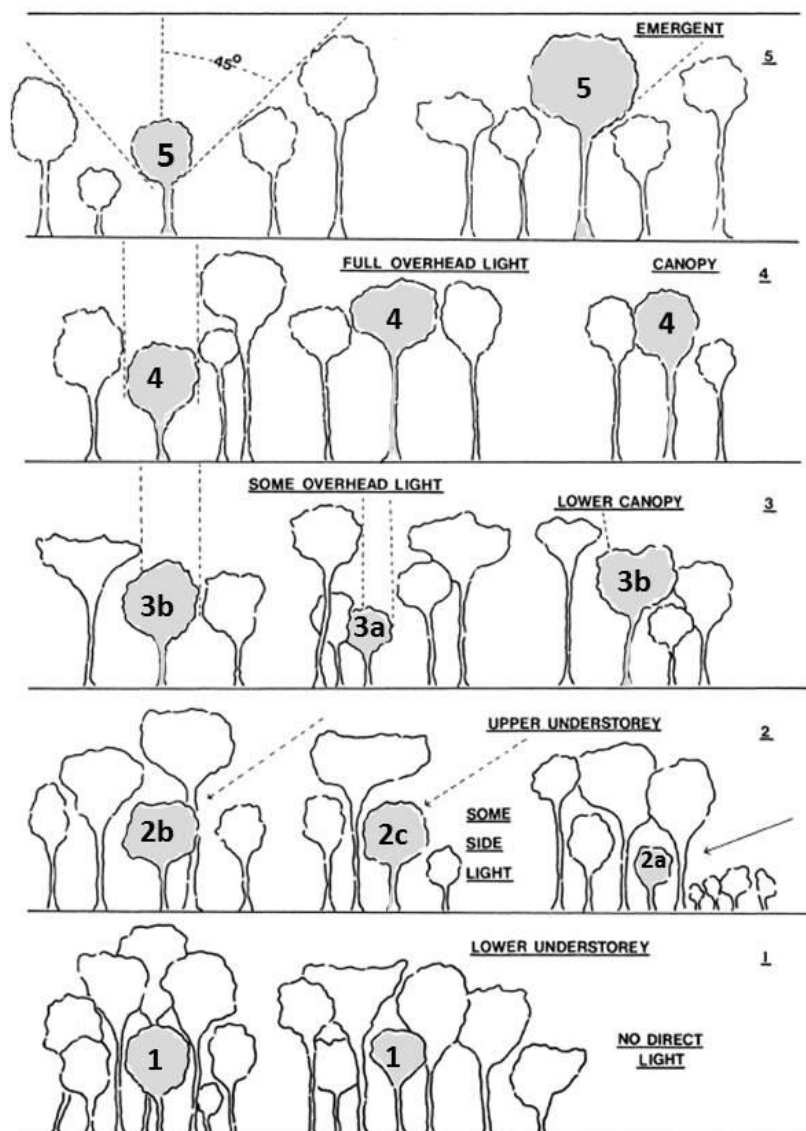


Figure 1. Crown Position Scores  
(Reproduced from Silvicultural Research Plan, 1959-63, Forest Dept., Uganda.)

Image taken from Synnott, T.J. (1979). Synnott, T.J. (1979). A manual of permanent plot procedures for tropical rain forests. Tropical Forestry Papers no. 14. 67pp. Department of Forestry Commonwealth Forestry Institute, University of Oxford. UK. ISBN:0 85074 031 2. ISSN:0141-9668.

## Appendix 4 - RAINFOR Fieldwork Database Codes for Lianas

### **FLAG 1: ALIVE STATUS (If the liana is dead, write “0” in this column)**

- a=** Alive normal, should be used by itself unless liana is a recruit.
- b=** Alive, broken stem/top & resprouting, or at least live phloem/xylem. Write in the comments column at what height the stem is broken.
- c=** Alive, leaning by  $\geq 10\%$ . The leaning code cannot be used with the fallen code 'd'.
- d=** Alive, fallen (e.g. on ground).
- e=** Cabled.
- f=** Alive, hollow.
- g=** Alive, rotten.
- h=** Multiple stemmed individual, i.e. two or more stems  $>99\text{mm}$  at maximum diameter, branching below 1.3m height. Each stem  $>99\text{mm}$  gets a number. Should be used with other code - e.g. if a liana is leaning and with multiple stems use 'ch'.
- i=** Alive, no leaves, few leaves
- j=** Alive, burnt
- k=** Alive, snapped  $< 1.3\text{m}$  (therefore the diameter at 1.3m is 0mm).
- l=** Alive, itself has liana  $\geq 10\text{cm}$  diameter on stem or in canopy.
- m=** Itself covered by lianas. Use where canopy is at least 50% covered by lianas, even if no individual liana reaches 10cm diameter.
- n=** New recruit. Always use with another code- e.g. if liana is normal and new then use the code 'an', if liana is broken and a new recruit the code is 'bn'.
- o=** Lightning damage
- p=** Cut
- q=** Peeling bark (bark loose/flaking)
- s=** Has a strangler.
- u=** Elliptical.
- z=** Alive, declining productivity (nearing death)

**Note:** *Liana Alive Status Codes* can be used together in any combination. The only exceptions are codes 'a', 'c' and 'd'. Please read the notes when using these codes!

### **Main Host Status:**

- 1=** Climbs living host in plot
- 2=** Climbs dead host in plot
- 3=** Climbs living host outside plot
- 4=** Climbs dead host outside plot
- 5=** Climbs tree  $< 10\text{cm}$  diameter
- 6=** Does not climb any tree

**Note:** Record the “Main Host” Tag Number in the “Main Host” column. If the “Main Host” is outside the plot, record this information in the comments section.

Developed in 2012 and 2013 by RAINFOR participants, revised in 2014.

(*Oliver Phillips, Sophie Fauset, Ted Feldpausch, Gabriela Lopez-Gonzalez, Magnolia Restrepo Correa, Mark Burkitt*)

**FLAG 2: MODE OF DEATH (If the liana is alive, write “1” in this column)**

All dead lianas have two or three letter codes.

**1) Physical mechanism of mortality (How the liana died)**

- a= Standing
- b= Broken (snapped stem)
- c= Fallen
- d= Standing or broken, probably standing (not uprooted)
- e= Standing or broken, probably broken (not uprooted)
- f= Standing or broken (not uprooted)
- g= Broken or uprooted, probably uprooted
- h= Broken or uprooted, probably broken
- i= Broken or uprooted (not standing)
- k= Vanished (found location, liana looked for but not found)
- l= Presumed dead (location of liana not found e.g. problems, poor maps, etc.)
- m= Unknown

**2) Number of woody stems in Mortality event**

- p= Died alone
- q= Died with Host
- r= Unknown

**3) Killed or killer process**

- j= Anthropogenic
- n= Burnt
- o= Lightning
- s= Unknown whether killed or killed
- t= Died with host that the liana killed
- u= Died with host tree, no more information.
- v= Died with host that died broken.
- w= Died with host tree that died uprooted
- x= Died due to fallen branches of dead host tree
- y= Died due to fallen branches of living host tree
- 4= Killed by strangler / liana competition [liana died standing]
- 5= Fell from living, undamaged host tree

Note: Select one code from each category. For example a dead liana that is fallen, died alone and was killed by branches from a living host tree would be 'cpy'.

For multiple deaths the numbers of lianas that died should be recorded and written in the comments column.

For broken liana the height at which the breakage occurred should be recorded in the comments column.

**Flag 3: MEASUREMENT TECHNIQUE**

For each diameter type

- 0= Normal measurement, tape measurement
- 3= Estimate
- 5= Unknown
- 6= Caliper
- 7= Geometric Mean (Max, min dimensions)

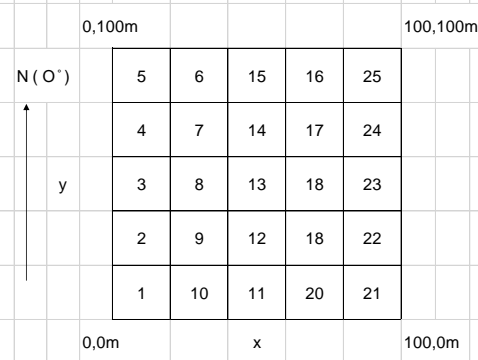
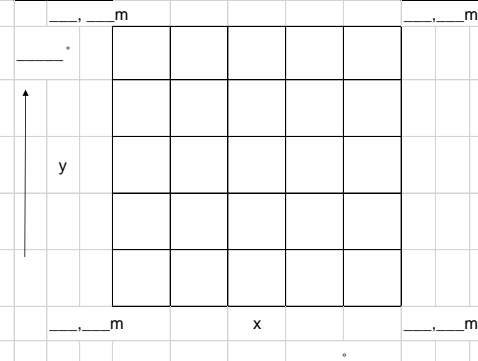
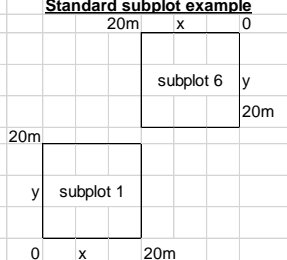
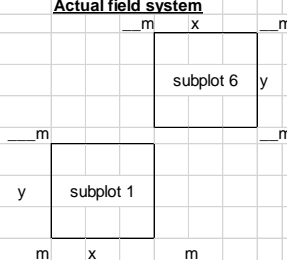
**Flag 4: POST-FIELD DATA MANAGEMENT**

For each diameter type

- 0= Normal measurement, no retrospective modification
- 1= Extrapolated from measures of same diameter type
- 2= Corrected expected typographical error
- 3= Interpolated from measures of same diameter type
- 4= Estimated using median growth rates
- 7= Zero growth rate assumed
- 8= Another transformation, see notes/ not clear what was done
- 9= Extrapolated using ratio of diameters from later census
- 10= Extrapolated using mean ratio of diameters for taxon

**Note:** Only one measurement technique and one data post-field data management (Flag 4) code should be selected each liana and each diameter should have a measurement technique and diameter type. **Comments:** Everything else!

**Appendix 5 – Fieldsheet Header Template**

<b>Plot code:</b>			
<b>Plot name:</b>			
<b>State, Country, Continent</b>			
<b>Census date:</b>			
<b>Funding project:</b>			
<b>Project PI(s):</b>			
<b>Inventory leader:</b>			
<b>Botanist(s):</b>			
<b>Assistants:</b>			
<b>Plot form, area and layout</b>	Add to Plot Notes:		
Plot area (ha):	Ground / Projected Planar	Corner stakes present (PVC/metal)?	YES/NO
Minimum plot dimension (m):	Maximum plot dimension (m):	Internal subplot stakes present (PVC or metal)?	YES/NO
Note: standard plot set up is as below. Modify 'actual field system' map based on actual plot layout.			
<b>Standard example</b>			
			
<b>Actual field system</b>			
Add to map below and plot notes:			
<b>Plot orientation</b>			
compass bearing			
true or magnetic north?			
GPS measurements for each corner (Latitude, Longitude, Altitude)			
subplot layout			
Lat: _____	Long: _____	Lat: _____	Long: _____
Alt: _____	Alt: _____	Alt: _____	Alt: _____
			
Lat: _____	Long: _____	Lat: _____	Long: _____
Alt: _____	Alt: _____	Alt: _____	Alt: _____
<b>Subplot and tree mapping</b>			
Note: standard tree mapping is at plot level, with the origin in the most south west (bottom left) corner.			
Or, if trees are mapped at subplot level, the origin is always on the left as moving through subplot, thus the origin alternates sides based on subplot			
<b>Standard subplot example</b>		<b>Actual field system</b>	
Please circle: 20m x 0		____m x ____m	
<b>Plot / Subplot level</b>		<b>Plot / Subplot level</b>	
			

<b>Tree and liana measurements</b>							
minimum tree size measured (mm):							
minimum liana size measured (mm):							
<b>Plot description (written description of plot):</b>							
<b>How to find plot (nearby villages, trails, streams, etc.). Draw map if necessary</b>							
<b>ForestType (please circle)</b>							
Moisture	Dry, moist, wet						
Elevation	lowland, Pre-montane, Lower montane, Upper-montane						
Edaphic	Brown sand, former floodplain, seasonal flood plain, rarely flooded, swamp, terra firme, sand						
Composition	Mixed forest, monodominant, savanna, palm-dominated, bamboo-dominated, liana-dominated						
Status	Old-growth, Logged, Burned,						
	Mixed: Old-growth and Logged, Mixed: Old-growth and Burned, Mixed: Old-growth and Vehicle Trail,						
	Mixed: Logged and Burned, Mixed: Old-growth and Secondary, Mixed: Burned and Secondary, Mixed: Logged and Secondary						
	Secondary forest, young (<10yr); Secondary forest, intermediate (10-24yr);						
	Secondary forest, older (25-49yr); Secondary forest, maturing (>50yr); Secondary forest, age unknown						
Average Slope	Flat (0 - 2 degrees); Almost Flat (2 - 5 degree slope);						
	Slightly Sloping (5 - 10 degree slope); Moderately Sloping (10 - 20 degree slope);						
	Steep (>20 degree slope)						
<b>Anthropogenic Disturbance since last census</b>				yes		no	
a	signs of hunting						
b	non-timber forest product harvesting						
c	trails (footpaths)						
d	trails (mechanized vehicle)						
e	trees <10 cm cut						
f	trees ≥10cm cut						
g	comments:						
<b>Fragmentation (consult with remote sensing images as necessary)</b>							
Nearest Anthropogenic Edge (m):							
Fragment area (ha):							
Comments on anthropogenic edge (e.g. land cover/use):							
<b>Futher plot notes</b>							