

The Restoration Process

Seedlings and Nurseries

Our process is highly participatory and it includes input from all who wish to lend their voice to the program. Suggestions come from across the community, including the school children, their parents and the teachers. The students enjoy this program because they have a voice. This is a novel experience as almost all other decisions in their lives are made for them.

We use three types of tree nurseries: A state managed facility run by the Guatemalan Ministry of Agriculture, school yard nurseries, plus a few informal volunteer back yard nurseries.



The Guatemalan Ministry of Agriculture (MAGA) encourages forest restoration and provides saplings to anyone who will help restore forests. This tree nursery is located in the town of La Libertad, about thirty miles south of our planting area. These seedlings are available for our use at minimal cost.

Saplings are individually wrapped in black plastic and organized by age and species. As we increase the scope of our tree planting, MAGA can ramp up their ability to provide tree saplings. This ability to obtain an unlimited number of trees reduces our costs and helps all community efforts to reforest rainforests. We seek a full restoration of the botanical species that originally populated these forests.



For transportation to reforestation sites, fifteen to twenty saplings are packed by hand into milk cartons. They will be driven in trucks to a location near a trail head, and then carried into the remote areas where replanting takes place. These cartons are durable and will be used over and over for many years.



School Yard Nurseries

The many functions and values of the rainforest are part of the classroom curriculum. This includes education about the specific tree species and how they grow and flourish and the practical lessons involved in gathering seeds, germination, nurture and growth in small nurseries.



After tree seeds are collected in the local rainforest, they are soaked in water to accelerate germination. As soon as they sprout, they are moved into enriched soil for continued growth. Here on the left several students manage the seed plots. seeds that will eventually become seedlings and that will be transplanted into the rainforest.

The school nurseries may be small, but we have no shortage of supervisors and opinions. One school yard nursery is in the town of Santa Elena. It is maintained cooperatively by students with assistance from a few soldiers from the nearby Army base.

