



# Michoacán Reforestation Fund and La Cruz Habitat Protection Project



wish all our friends and supporters a

Happy, Healthy New Year  
Prospero Año Nuevo

**Holiday Newsletter 2006**

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Sharing with you the highlights of our tenth successful year of planting trees  
in and around the monarch overwintering habitats in Michoacán, Mexico

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## **Two and a Half Million Trees Planted**

We are proud to announce that in 2006 the Michoacán Reforestation Fund (MRF) and La Cruz Habitat Protection Project (LCHPP) planted an additional 420,000 pine and oyamel seedlings in areas within and adjacent to the Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve in the State of Michoacán, Mexico. We have come a long way since our first plantings in 1997 when four families planted 7,000 pine seedlings in fields that had been previously used to grow corn. Hundreds of families have now participated in planting nearly two and a half million trees on their family parcels or communally managed lands.



*Reforestation site in El Rosario*

## **Our Reforestation Programs**

Restoring forest in the buffer zones and other areas around the monarch's overwintering habitat is a crucial step in providing stability to the region. Reforestation is being undertaken as part of a strategy to help secure the long-term survival of monarch butterflies. Our goal is to reduce the rate of deforestation in the monarch reserve by establishing alternative sites for wood to be sustainably harvested to meet the high demand that exists in the area for domestic and industrial wood use. Of equal importance, the restoration of forests reduces erosion, protects the watersheds, and provides a source of firewood and income for the local people.

Since the reforestation project was started in 1997, we have helped many local communities convert corn and oat fields back into forested land, a difficult task due to the degraded soil conditions and highly exposed nature of the sites on steep mountainsides. Participants receive technical assistance for sustainable management of their reforested lands, enabling them to have wood for their daily needs. In addition to reforesting farmland that was cleared decades ago, many seedlings are planted by communities to restore forests degraded by fires or logging. Once the seedlings become established, they grow rapidly, gaining one meter or more in height each year. The trees continue to grow rapidly, attaining a basal diameter of 16 inches in 15 years, thereby constituting a valuable timber resource that can be used as income by the landowners or communities.

On the other hand, some communities do not want to harvest trees at all, having experienced mudslides and loss of spring flow due to forest and watershed degradation. They wish to restore the forests to protect their homes and water supply.

### **Educational Outreach**

With help from a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, MRF and LCHPP provided over 5,000 trees for planting by three schools in the monarch area as part of an environmental education program. Over 500 school children, parents, and teachers participated in the tree planting. In addition to the practical hands-on experience, the program included lessons on forest ecology, the value of trees and the importance of reforestation and conservation. This program was integrated into the participating primary schools' curriculum.



*Jose Luis & Padre Angel meet with local participants at reforestation site*



*Tree planting by Zitacuaro Primary School*

Over the years, tens of thousands of trees have been given to local schools, instilling a sense of forest stewardship by teaching young people to care for the land on which they live, by word and deed.

We hope to continue to teach both young and old about the value of reforestation and caring for their forests that provide so much for them.



### **Innovations at the LCHPP Nursery (Vivero La Cruz)**

The success of the program is in large part due to the ingenuity of Jose Luis Alvarez, the owner of Vivero La Cruz, whose innovative techniques have produced large numbers of healthy, hardy seedlings. Based upon the concepts of Rudolf Steiner, the nursery produces its own substrate from organic materials, as opposed to relying on the mining of natural soils and the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Combining compost, manure, tree bark, coconut fiber, vermiculite and stone flour (different types of rocks ground-up to a bread flour consistency) the seedlings are healthy and resistant to disease and stress when they are planted.

Until three years ago, all the seedlings were raised in small black plastic bags. Jose Luis then invested in “copper blocks”, reusable styrofoam blocks impregnated with root growth regulator, that produce taller and stronger seedlings with greater root mass. Quality seedlings produce quality trees. When ready for transplanting, the seedlings are taken from the blocks, along with the fortified organic substrate, and wrapped in bundles of 25 trees. The lighter weight also makes it much easier for our local reforestation participants to carry the seedlings up the high and steep mountain slopes where they are planted.



*New Watering Robot at Vivero La Cruz*

Instead of relying on manually operated sprinkler systems, the nursery now uses automatic robot watering arms to evenly moisten the seedlings in the copper blocks. With the acquisition of more robots and copper blocks this year, Vivero La Cruz is now in the position of producing over one million trees per year. It is only with your help that this can be accomplished.



*Jose Luis with seedlings*

### **Trees for Peace**

Jose Luis Alvarez was given a grant in 2006 from the German group Fair Travel that charges each of its tourists one dollar to support the environment. This grant plus support from Grupo Bimbo, a Mexican food company, enabled the planting of 20,000 additional trees to two indigenous communities in west-central Michoacán that had been fighting over the forest for years, with bloodshed on both sides. This cycle of revenge and violence was resolved with a peace agreement, a large part of which included each community receiving assistance for tree planting. The planting of trees, hopefully, will sow the roots of change and prosperity.

The need for reforestation of monarch habitats in their unique winter home is vast and urgent. Illegal logging continues unrelentingly to take its toll on the monarchs and the environment.



Our programs are made possible with grants and individual contributions. We thank each of you for your support. It is only with your help that we can reach our goal of planting one million trees a year.

**You can help make a difference.**

Here is my contribution of:

\$25  \$50  \$100  \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Yes! Please place me on the MRF mailing list.

How did you hear about us? \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: MRF / University of Kansas  
1200 Sunnyside Avenue / Lawrence, KS 66045-7534

## **Helping to Plant More Trees**

The cost per seedling has been and still remains only fifty cents for each one. This covers propagation and caring for the seedlings at the nursery, delivering seedlings to the planting sites, monitoring of their survival and progress, and technical assistance for participating landowners.

Your tax-deductible gift promotes forest and watershed restoration, and also monarch butterfly conservation, all of which help local communities. Your contribution also has a positive affect on the global environment, as growing forests sequester atmospheric carbon.

**It is said that every decision we make should take into consideration the next seven generations.  
Consider giving a gift of trees this holiday season now to positively impact the future.**

All donations are tax deductible. The Michoacán Fund is a 501(c) (3) tax-exempt organization. LCHPP is an ongoing initiative based in Mexico made possible through the leadership and involvement of Jose Luis Alavarez, owner of Vivero La Cruz, a tree nursery based in Santa Clara de Cobre, Michoacán, Mexico.

Checks should be sent to: The Michoacán Reforestation Fund, University of Kansas, 1200 Sunnyside Avenue, Lawrence, KS 66045-7534, tel. 1-785-864-4850.

Please visit our website: [www.MichoacanMonarchs.org](http://www.MichoacanMonarchs.org)

**Thank you for making reforestation possible.**



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