# CLOUD FOREST ORGANICS

## 2025 / 26 REPORT

# LETTER FROM FOUNDER

*Eggs of Crystal Frogs*

Last year, when we completed our report, I wondered, "What will we have to show next year?" I hope you're as curious to find out what transpired as I was at the start of the year!

**Our bird species count grew from 85 to 129, and we found 86 distinct mushroom species**. Our bat survey revealed an additional 20 species to four we had on our list. After 3 ½ years of struggle, we finally began seeing the at risk of extinction tree species we planted winning the war against the relentless pasture grasses. Seemingly aided by the emerging trees and shrubs we never planted, the growth spurt is apparent in our data. Wildlife which before just peeked into our recovery areas, have begun to move in, offspring in tow!

The sounds of birds have intensified. Most mesmerizing is the increased vibrational hum and visible flight of insects, bees and butterflies. Like a calm after a storm, pasture grasses are being overtaken by a myriad of tiny flowering plants and fast-growth unplanted trees. We've added free labor!

**We planted 1000 trees**, recovering new plots with improved methodologies while replacing trees that died in our first iterations. We advanced in building the Crystal Frog research center, making important structural improvements. We continued our orchid and tree species studies, and began intriguing mushroom identification work. This included starting our on-site lab for innoculating spores of edible species, adding exotic new flavors to our wild foods inventory.

**Our 2025 documentary Crystal Frog** is getting cloud forests some attention. So far it has screened at 15 festivals worldwide, with numerous awards and nominations.

**Climate-wise, the floods, road damage, and mudslides in 2025 were even worse than 2024.** The wrath of nature intensified, with rain, mud and mountain debris severing road passage for months between the Amazonian towns below us and Quito, the capital. Our two footbridges used to arrive to the Cloud Forest Organics reforestation site and Crystal Frog research center were ripped away by a torrential storm, requiring new paths. Yet it's exactly this dramatic reality, amplified in the Amazon cloud forest with global implications, that motivates us to continue forward and develop solutions. Each team member showed remarkable courage and initiative.

In this report, I will share with you highlights of our discoveries, results in numbers and images, and our projected path forward. **Thank you to those who have made charitable donations to support our work.** You've enabled us to test new rewilding techniques with assisted reforestation. You've afforded us patience to learn before recommending quick fix solutions to forest communities, or rushing into mass sale of the next superfood. You've enabled us to work with scientists and academic institutions who have seen their budgets slashed. You've helped us build an impossible dream, a living research center whose unique focus is recovery of cloud forests as a biome on life support. With every passing year we are unraveling more mysteries of the Amazonian cloud forest.

**Craig Daniel Leon**
*craig@cloudforestorganics.com*

# THE AMAZONIAN CLOUD FOREST

## Cloud forest, a cooler high altitude rain forest

The cloud forests are the sloped tropical mountains adjacent to rain forests, those higher altitude misty lands where **humidity can reach 100 percent**. Here along the higher slopes of the Amazon basin, is where the headwaters are formed. It's Earth's womb above sea level, where many endemic species of flora and fauna emerge, many spreading downward to the rain forest.

Cloud forests, or fog forests, are basically aquifers in the sky. Here the Amazon rivers are formed that flow down into the rain forest. Here is where wildlife and plant species requiring cooler climate can survive.

**Our research reserve spans 2000-2600 meters (6600 – 8500 feet) above sea level**. In and above the clouds, it's brimming with emblematic bromeliads and epiphytes, furry mammals, and unique reptiles and amphibians including the rare crystal frog. Amazonian coatís are moving their way up from the rain forest below, coexisting with the Andean coati, along with the tapirs, eagles, white-spectacled bears. An abundance of other life forms need cool and humid cloud forests to survive.

In Margaret Atwood's 2003 dystopian novel *Oryx and Crake*, cloud forests are completely wiped out and replaced with coffee farms. Indeed, cloud forests have been decimated faster than any other natural biome. In the 1970s, they were 12% of Earth's total forest. **Today, they're only 2% and shrinking**. We are developing on site cost-effective reforestation techniques to have tools for stopping virtual extinction in the next 35 years, as anticipated by a USDA forestry survey. Our living laboratory and reforestation trials clearly show that reversal is possible.

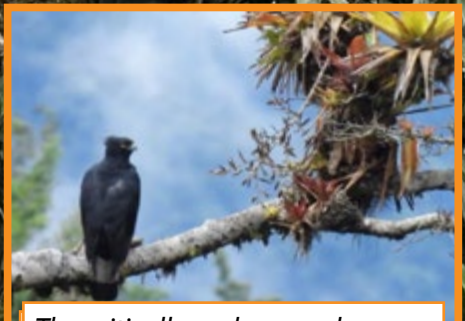
Water generated in the Cloud Forest ecosystem plays a key role in sustaining rainfall across the Amazon Basin

Found between 800 and 3,000 meters above sea level

Over 30% of its animal and plant species are found nowhere else on Earth.

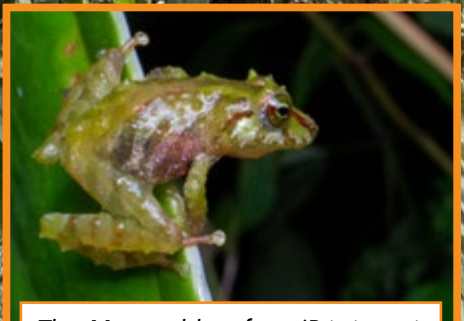
At current deforestation rates, the 10% of cloud forests that remain will be extinct by 2060 (photo taken below our reserve).


In the last half century, cloud forests dropped from 12% to 2% of world forests (this is all that's left)



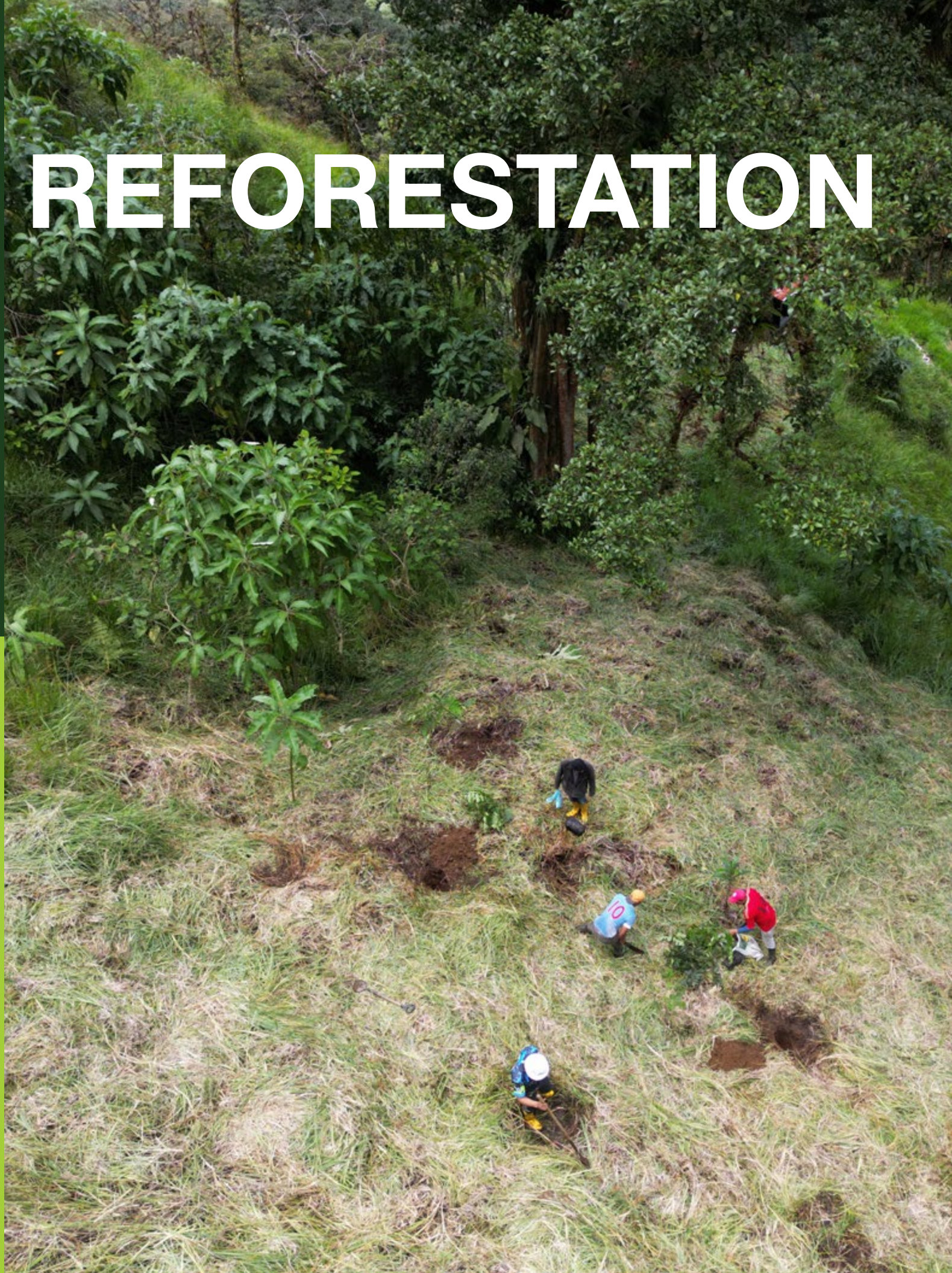
*The critically endangered Andean Eagle* (*Spizaetus isidori*)

*Cyrtochilium trifurcatum* is our mascot orchid.



*The Moss robber frog* (*Pristimantis eriphus*) *is vulnerable because of habitat loss.*

# REFORESTATION



*Proactively protecting a baby logma tree from grass onslaught on steep terrain*

*Vicente (agronomist) showing technique for planting wild naranjilla (lulo)*

**This is not traditional agroforestry because only native species are introduced into our model**. We've taken the concept of biodynamic agriculture, an organic production system where no offsite inputs are used, and are testing what will happen if additionally no offsite trees are planted. This creates a marketing and bioeconomy challenge, as nothing planted has an established large market. But if it works, native cloud forests recover with ancient and forgotten foods and medicines that could be offered to the world. That would help families that depend on cloud forests for their livelihoods while recovering cloud forests at scale.

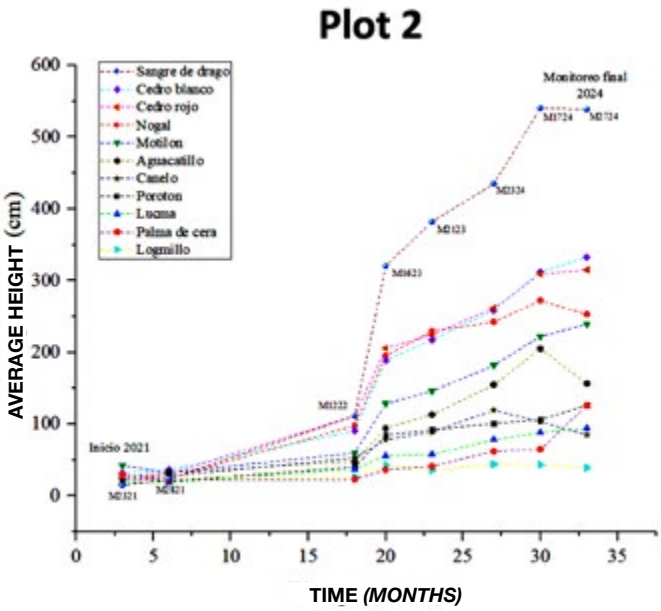
Tree growth rates have been approximately **700% in 3 years** on our first test plots, with an average 24% mortality. The biggest challenges have been competition with pasture grasses, mechanical damage from controlling the grasses, and wildlife and insects eating the trees. However, trees we never planted are appearing spontaneously, filling the spaces where planted trees died with other species that Nature has selected. Most interestingly, some show more potential than the trees we planted. Take the wild montane matico, a *Piperacia*, whose leaves we have distilled into blue oil, the Holy Grail of biodynamic agriculture.

In 2025, we added wild fruit plants to our first test plot. We began our 4th iteration of reforestation in a new area, as our Earth Day 2025 initiative to expand forest recovery. We entered another part of the cloud forest, severely degraded and cut down, with nearly 1000 logma, wild walnut and red cedars. These are all at risk species.

We have exciting news: we've developed a way for trees planted with "raw roots" without the potting soil from the nursery to perform as well as those planted with their original soil. This means **our reforestation team can carry 20 times more plants** on steep terrain. This lightweight option is a breakthrough, saving labor costs and making cloud forest recovery replicable because it will be more affordable.

*Measuring gravitational curves for perfect water and mycelium flow*

*Intern measuring tree girth while falling in love with nature*




Height Growth Rate of Trees in PLOT #2

Data sampling start:23/07/2021 end: 27/06/2024

| Scientific Name | Common name | Average Seedling Height (cm) | | Growth Percentage (2021-2024) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 2021 | 2024 | |
| *Erytrina edulis* | Poroton | 19 | 127 | 568 |
| *Pouteria sp.* | Lucma | 18 | 94 | 422 |
| *Juglans neotropica* | Nogal | 23 | 253 | 1000 |
| *Hyronimia duquei* | Motilon | 42 | 239 | 469 |
| *Cedrela sp.* | Cedro rojo | 25 | 315 | 1160 |
| *Croton lechleri* | Sangre de drago | 24 | 538 | 2142 |
| *Ceroxylon sp.* | Palma de cera | 29 | 135 | 366 |
| *G. kunthiana* | Logmillo | 21 | 39 | 86 |
| *Ocotea sp.* | Aguacatillo | 27 | 156 | 478 |
| *Cedrela sp.* | Cedro blanco | 32 | 332 | 938 |
| *N. membranacea* | Canelo | 22 | 86 | 291 |
| | Overall Average | 26 | 210 | 720 |

*Note to chart 1: Growth spurt after 15 months*
*Note to chart 2: Tree adaptation gets better and better*


*A perfect located living lab for cloud forest recovery – no roads, just nature and test plots*

# CRYSTAL FROG RESEARCH CENTER

It is mindblowing to realize that just 6 years ago, we had a cattle rancher shack as our place. Now it's a base of learning and discovery. **Crystal Frog's entire focus is how to resuscitate cloud forests as a dying ecosystem**. Consistent with that goal, we made two difficult decisions which complicated the construction. First, no roads would be put in. While this would dramatically improve access and reduce construction costs, it would undo the pristine habitat in the midst of primordial beauty, and limit our learning possibilities of how cloud forests truly work. Second, we did our best to use only wood from trees that had already fallen. This also limited our construction materials and made transport to the building site a Herculean effort.

Our 2025 film *Crystal Frog* is precisely about these decisions and the process. We put in water filtration systems, but kept the water pure with no chlorification. We put in a biodigester to naturally process the waste created on site. We put in solar panels for energy and hot water. We put in a satellite internet system. We are constructing the kitchen ecologically using stone and tree branches, beautiful and functional for culinary researchers to create with wild ingredients. Silvia Baldini, master chef and Food Network *Chopped* Champion, has been our guide.

Our on-site research lab, currently focusing on cloud forest mushrooms and mycelim innoculation, is designed based on laboratory standards. In the meantime, we've used a makeshift facility and hope to have this equipped by 2026.

*Planting herbs in rock garden next to experimental kitchen*

*Warmth of a double-faced chimney cuts the chill*

*Gargantuan effort of bringing a biodigester by foot to research site*

# 2025

*Microorganisms process and clean used water from kitchen and bathrooms*

*Shower wall of recycled fence posts*

*Lab in progress*

*Kitchen floor of stone and branch stumps*

*Creating an ecological space for learning, experimenting, & researching*

# 2022

*Original Kitchen*

*Oxidized roof now gone*

# WILD TREES, PLANTS AND ORCHIDS

*Lepanthes contingens*

*Solanum quitoense wild fruit known locally as naranjilla and as lulo in Quechua*

*Corynaea crassa a rare holoparasite used traditionally for male impotence*

*aff. Odontadenia macrantha rarely found, sign of forest recovery, medicinal properties to be explored*

**We've now identified 51 orchid species, up from 45 last year**, all exquisite and quite a few of which may be completely new discoveries. On the night before orchid specialist Marco Montero's last day of work, we had a stroke of luck. Crash! A huge branch broke from a tree about 100 meters from the Crystal Frog research center. The next morning, we conducted our orchid and bromeliad rescue mission, finding repeats of dozens of species on a single branch. That led us to realize, given the reserve's large altitudinal range of 600 meters, we are likely to find many more in the coming years!

We also completed **our initial native tree study, identifying 91 different species, many unregistered in Ecuador or anywhere.** Two stand out: one known by an indigenous researcher as "moco de gorilla" or Gorilla snots for the way the fruits look, the other "Menthol" which has a fragrant minty bark which makes a glorious tea. These trees are currently being registered and reviewed in a leading national herbarium.

**Our wild plant study has already identified 153 unique species**, many still not known at the species level, and others revealing of a healthy ecosystem. Some are becoming increasingly rare because of habitat loss, including *Corynaea crassa*, known as Andean viagra, popping up throughout the reserve.

*A Solanacea among 91 tree species being identified on site*

**We have identified 51 orchid species and our plant study revealed 153 unique species**

**Our initial native tree study identified 91 different species, many unregistred.**

*Orchid rescue! Dozens of unique species from a single fallen branch*

*Lepanthes contingens*

*Masdevallia rosea (front)*

*Masdevallia rosea (side)*

*Juvenile black and chestnut eagle hanging out at research station*

# CURIOUS WILDLIFE

Last year the wildlife could be seen in the forests bordering the reforestation areas. Now, they are found more commonly in our test plots, nibbling at the bark of the trees or passing through, not as sole individuals inspecting the terrain, but entire families.

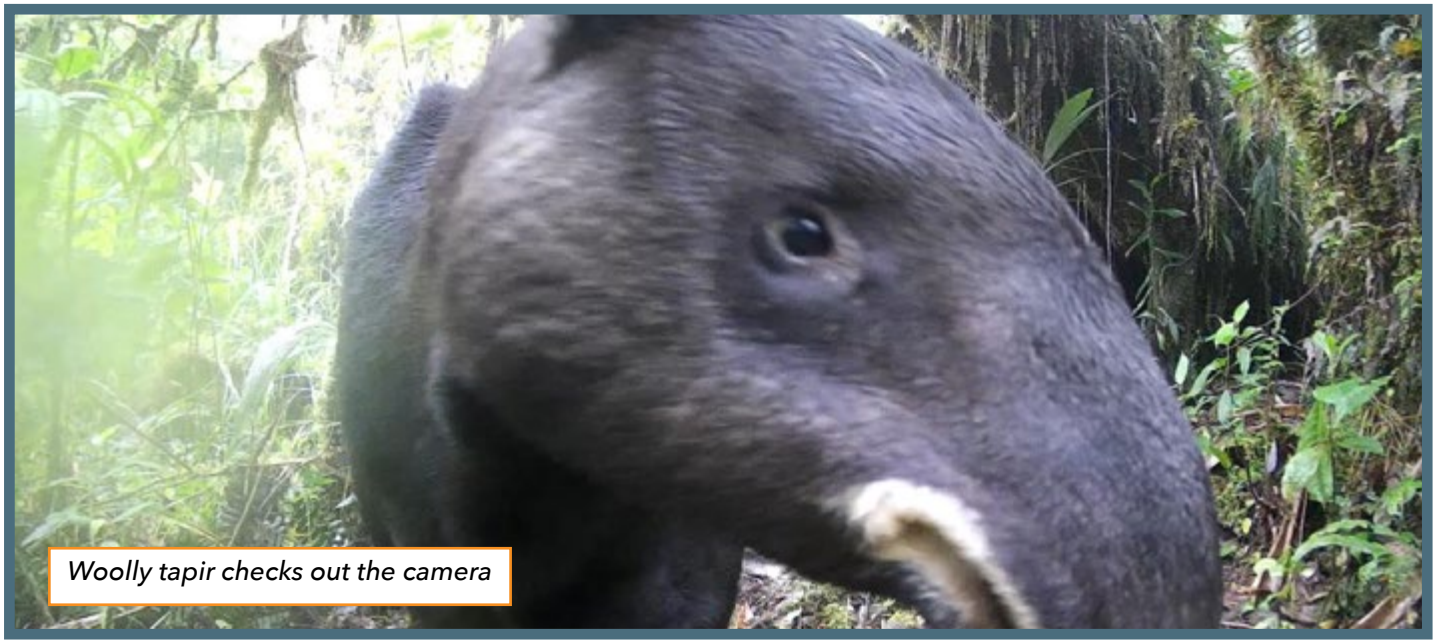
Turns out the bark of the red montane cedars and the poroton bean trees we planted have medicinal qualities needed by wildlife. What properties might they have that could advance medicine for humans?

Woolly Tapirs, survivors barely evolved from the Jurassic period, are roaming our reserve. We are seeing them in pairs. Hard to believe there are **only 2500 left on Earth**. We look forward to seeing the baby tapirs!

Finally, this year we have visual proof that the Andean coatís, which are known to thrive in colder climates, are being accompanied now by the lower altitude Amazonian coatís co-existing on the reserve. Mountain pacas, on the **IUCN risk of extinction list**, are gracing our field cameras along with other at-risk species such as pumas, wildcats and the white spectacled bears. Even the anteaters are showing up more frequently.

*Night monkeys peer into our research center at night*

*Translucent spider among many unusual creatures*



*Woolly tapir checks out the camera*



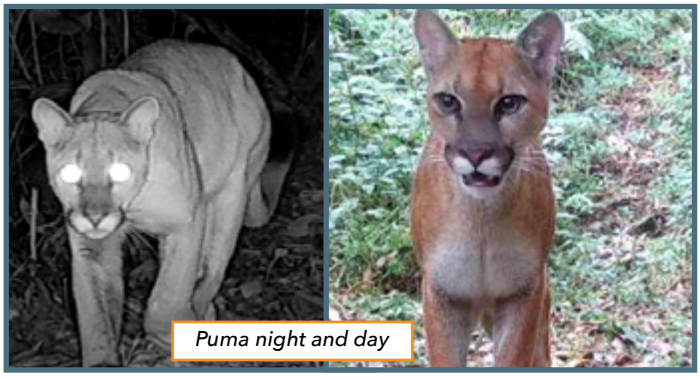
**Amphibians and reptiles, among the most endangered species on Earth**, overlooked and unprotected, are growing in our inventory list, **from 28 last year to 33 species now, including a number of still unidentified frogs.**

According to the scientists who have helped us collect data on species on our cloud forest reserve, the flora and fauna are not just existing symbiotically. They are co-evolving. This means we have unique and specialized plants and wildlife adapting to each other, like the **Anoura bat with its curved long snout perfectly shaped to extract nectar from the Burmeistera plants.**

We are excited to share artistic renditions donated to us from artists from all over the world. The anteater (1) is painted by **Hanka Rzepinska (Poland)**, the tapir (2) by **Carlos Quishpe (Ecuador)** and the puma (3) by **Alexandra Saunders (USA)**.


# CAUGHT ON CAMERA

*Highland tinamou foraging on one of our trails*



*Puma night and day*

*South America's only bear species moves closer*

*Red brock deer brings babies to cedar tree*

*Anteater foraging*

*Kitty cat tigercat*

*Our first good Guanta (Mountain Paca) night shot with white light camera*

*Amazonian coati moves into test plot*

# BATS

Bats are known as nature's barometers, the species which appear as indicators of forest recovery. On our reserve, thanks to two surveys conducted by bat scientists. Already **24 unique species have been identified on site.** Currently, the species are being studied to understand the ecology. We look forward to seeing which bats are thriving on site over the next 5 years. **As we had already identified 4 in our last survey, adding 20 brings our mammal list to 46**. Three species thriving on our reserve face some level of extinction risk. Interestingly, most of the bats found are fruit bats, the others nectar and insect bats. None were bloodthirsty.

## PHYLLOSTOMIDAE

*The curved snout of Anoura bats is ideal for extracting nectar*

*Anoura aequatoris*

*Anoura cultrata*

*Anoura fistulata*

*Anoura geoffroyi*

*Anoura peruana*

*Carollia brevicauda*

*Dermanura glauca*

*Enchisthenes hartii*

*Micronycteris megalotis*

*Platyrrhinus cf. ismaeli*

*Platyrrhinus cf. umbratus*

*Sturnira bidens*

*Sturnira cf. bogotensis*

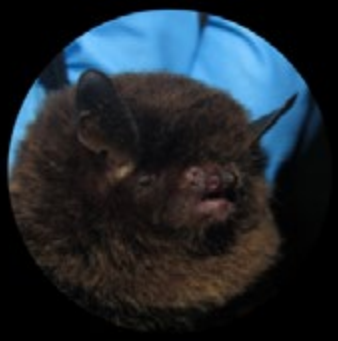
*Sturnira erythromos*

*Sturnira cf. lilium*

*Sturnira oporaphyllum*

*Histiotus cadenai*

*Lasiurus blossevillii*



*Myotis keaysi*

*Myotis oxyotus*

**VESPERTILIONIDAE**

*Molossus cf. rufus*

*Promops cf. centralis*

*Tadarida cf. brasiliensis*

*Each bat face is unique, revealing multiple contributions to nature*

*Scientists Andrea C. and Andrea M. spot a bat*

# FUNGI

# MUSHROOM

# MYCELIUM

*Cordyceps mushroom invades a bug brain, while a Thwaitesia mirror spider deals with a larvae*

Our research on cloud forest mycelium, the underground root network of fungi, is revealing insights into **how nature communicates between flora while spreading nourishment to weaker plants.**

In dedicating ourselves to the world of Fungi, we've embarked on a trip to Smurfland. We are beginning to understand the importance of this Kingdom, distinct from plants and animals. On the agronomic and reforestation front, we're researching the importance of mycorrhizal fungi, which interact with the tree roots and help transport nutrition. These thrive in natural environments uncontaminated by fertilizers and ultimately serve the same function, but for free.

We identified 86 distinct mushroom species growing on our site, 6 edible, 4 medicinal, along with at least one rare semi-parasitic species, Corynaea crassa, known by indigenous communities as a powerful aphrodisiac. Others could contribute to scientific advances like ecological fabrics and plastic replacements. One bright red species is believed to have properties to help process solar radiation. Add to this the results of our DNA soil study, which identified **1385 unique mycelium species in our 6 test areas**, many unidentified, taking distinct formations depending on the state of degradation of the land site. We want to study how mycelium distribution changes over time.

With so many fungi species still unknown and untested, it is vital to preserve their habitat. Imagine the real bioeconomy potential for the forest-dwelling communities and the world.

On site, we've begun innoculating and replicating and testing the known ones on different cloud forest wood. The poroton wood is proving to be a particularly good mushroom host.

*Cordyceps growing out of insect head*

*Show-and-tell: growth of edible Auricularia delicata micelium in a petri dish*

**We have identified 86 mushroom species. 6 of them edible, 4 medicinal along with at least one rare semi-parasitic species.**

**Mycelium is the network of fine, thread-like filaments (called hyphae) that form the main body of a fungus. Our DNA soil study identified 1385 unique species.**

*Green and Red Lichens, a cross between Fungi and Algae*

*Polyporus sp.*

*aff. Hygrocybe miniata*
*Size matters?*

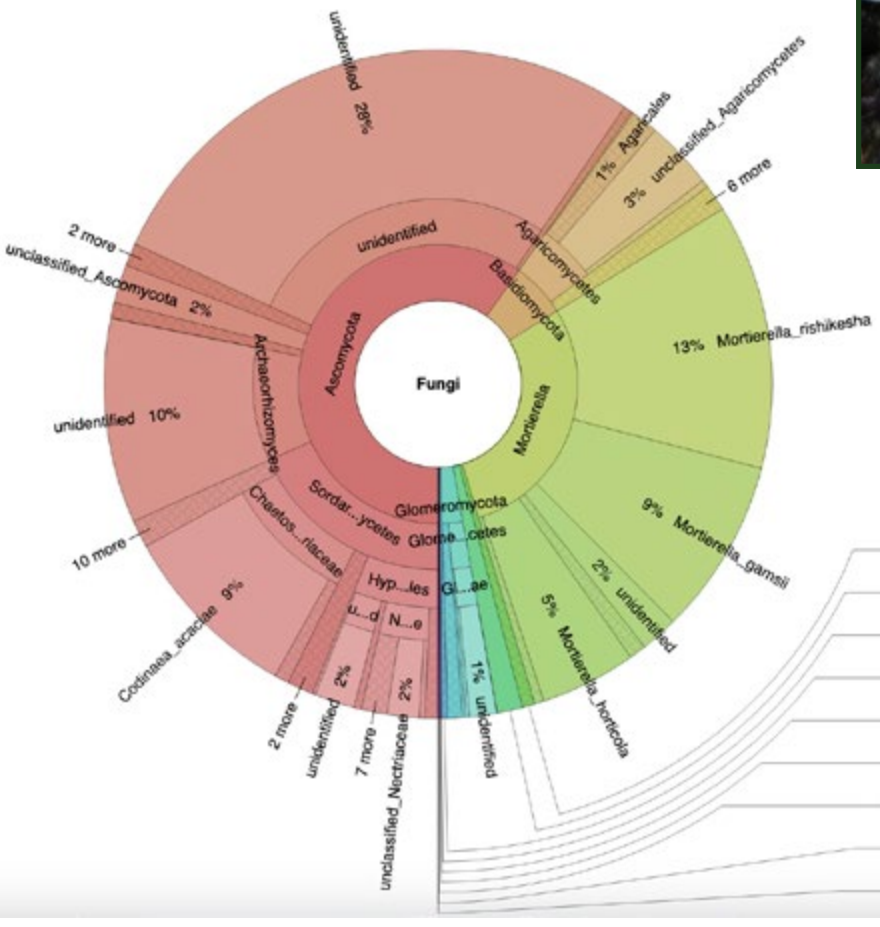
*Clitocybula azurea*

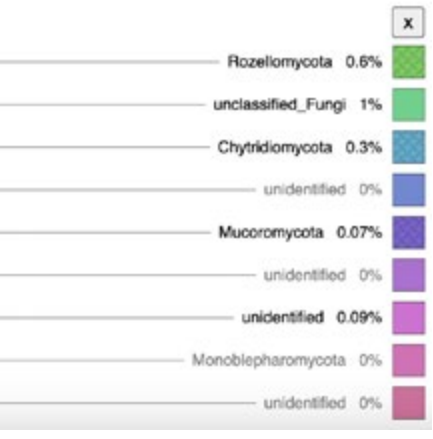
*Taking Mushroom stats*

*Marasmius aff. epelaeus*

*Mushrooms playing hide and seek*

*Edible Pleurotus sp.*



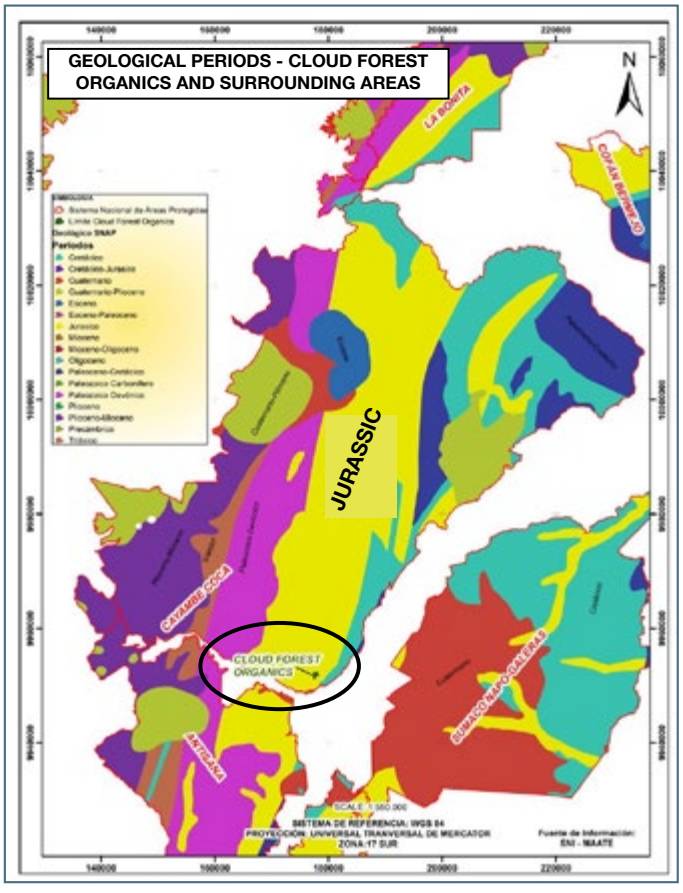

*Discovering mycelium networks, different in each test plot*

# JURASSIC FOODS

This geological map indicates that our reserve, a sliver of cloud forest nestled between the Andes peaks sloping to the Amazon basin, survived intact despite the melting polar caps that characterized the Jurassic period 150-200 million years ago. Our reserve and our backyard, a vast primitive primary National Park forest, abounds with living fossils in the form of trees, bushes and rare plants and fungi, many with unimaginable potential as food and medicine.

For six years, we have been uncovering more and more rare and unknown plants, many believed to be extinct in the wild such as *Vasconcella macrocarpa*, a distant relative of papaya, and several *Psychotria sp.* bushes, a psychedelic relative of coffee.

**In collaboration with national and international universities and research labs**, we are potentializing community benefit by finding medicinal and nutritional uses for cloud forest trees and plants.




*Our reserve, in a strip between Andes and Amazon, survived 2 extinctions. We keep discovering more wild and unknown foods, primitive and prehistoric.*

These include two unique species of logma (*Pouteria sp.*), a delicious high-protein fruit akin to lucuma. Nearly extinct Andean cherries, or motilón (*Hieronyma macrocarpa*), delicious and rich in antioxidants. Wild walnut, or tocte (*Junglans neotropica*) which is on the **IUCN Red List.**

The protein bean, porotón (*Erythrina edulis*), originally planted for its potential for gluten-free bread, dairy replacement and nutritious chips, has an unusual alcaloid structure showing potential as medicine for hospital borne microbial diseases, while in the field it's a favorite among wildlife and in the lab it's a wonderful mushroom host. We have wild cedars and wax palms planted as part of our diversification and recovery of endangered species, while the dragon's blood trees (*Croton lechleri*) with **bright red sap that rejuvenates skin and heals ulcers**, are showing fast growth with low mortality.


*Rich oil from wild tocte nuts*


*Vasconcella macrocarpa, rarely found in the wild*


*Squash ancestor?*


*White poroton tree beans*

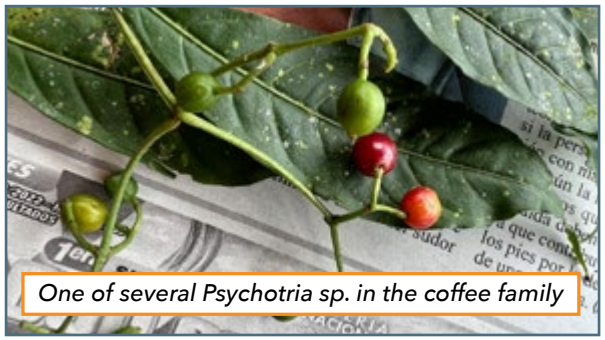

*Regenerative Tree Blood (Croton lechleri)*


*Nearly extinct Andean Cherries*

Neighborly food tasting

Selecting primitive logma fruits to process into powder

Wild achiote a food colorant and face paint



One of several Psychotria sp. in the coffee family

Another logma species, inside and out

Demonstrating Cloud forest foods at local school

Strategy session to save at risk frogs and snakes

# COMMUNITY

Trading logma plants with other native species

Art meets science

Presenting our model at UK biodynamic agriculture conference

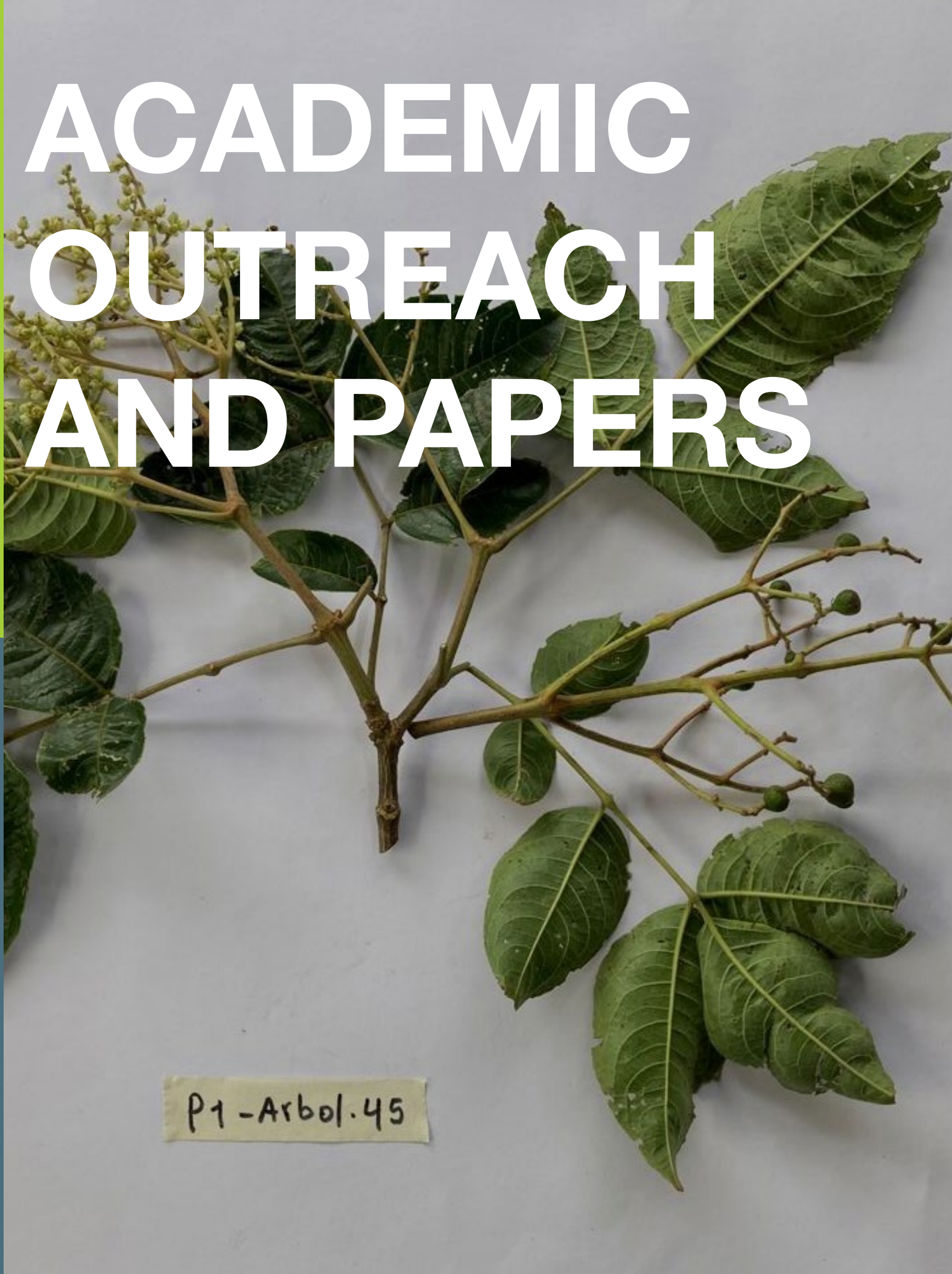
Film colleagues at Casa de la Cultura – Culture House of Quito

Sebastian and Marco search for new orchids

For our work to have meaning and continuity, community involvement and education are essential. Neighbors, scientists, people in the arts, visitors from other nature reserves, and international conferences are all vital for exchanging and sharing ideas. **We hope to continue expanding our educational outreach at all levels.**


A gathering of scientific and creative minds

# ACADEMIC OUTREACH AND PAPERS



Our cloud forest protection and recovery work continues to contribute to scholarly scientific papers, while allowing our work to be communicated at academic and ecologically-focused conferences and events. Last November, our botanical work was featured at a botanical conference in Cuenca, while founder Craig was invited as guest speaker at the Harvard Business School Earth Day Webinar. Topic: *Tapirs, Mycelium and Hallucinogenic Coffee*.

In 2025, the cloud forest agricultural model made its way to the UK. Craig was invited to the 3rd International Biodynamic Agriculture Conference at the Royal Agricultural College. The slide presentation ***Cloud Forest Recovery: Endemic Species, Agroforestry and Scientific Inquiry of Emerging Plants*** along with a YouTube link to a pre-event interview, are available upon request.

This year, Nature Scientific Reports published a paper, ***Sex affects the nesting diet of a large aerial predator of the Andes*** using our research base and habitat for this regional survey. The Cloud Forest Organics reserve is in the acknowledgments.

Currently, the University of the Americas (UDLA), together with research institute INIAP, Wageningen University and Cloud Forest Organics, are working on a paper ***Characterization of Erythrina edulis beans, pods and flour from Ecuador*** about alkaloids in the *Erythrina edulis* plant that show powerful medicinal properties beyond use for gluten-free bread and vegan ice cream.

Previous and ongoing papers, for internal use and publication, cover topics from our novel agroforestry model that prioritize nature (*Wageningen University, Princeton University*), to a scientific article about the only albino frog of its kind found in Latin America on our reserve (*Latin American Magazine of Herpetology*).

We hope to intensify our research and publications with the completion of the Crystal Frog research center, as a base for data gathering and rapid analysis as we branch out to collaborate with national and international research facilities. We are particularly excited about our upcoming paper, ***Reforestation Strategies Applied to Montane Cloud Forest: Key findings and techniques.***

## RESEARCH PAPERS

nature scientific reports

**Implications of human-wildlife conflict on the diet of an endangered avian top predator in the northern Andes**

**Sex affects the nestling diet of a large aerial predator of the Andes**

RLH Revista Latinoamericana de Herpetología

**First Record of Complete Albinism in a Species of the Genus *Pristimantis*, Jiménes de la Espada, 1870 (Anura: Strabomantidae) in the Ecuatorian Andes**

WAGENINGEN UNIVERSITY & RESEARCH

**Diverse economies and convivial conservation in the Cloud Forest Organics food forest in Ecuador.**

Northeastern University

**Reforesting and refreshing: Rueda Paz's dual mission in Ecuador**

Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador

**Mushroom and Fungi Inventory and Investigation, by Andrea Maldonado and Cristina Toapanta PhD**

UTE EC

**Sensory Analysis on Poroton / Chachafruto Chips made from Erythrina edulis beans**

udla

**Analysis and sampling study of Logma and Lúcuma powder**

## ONGOING STUDIES

Strategies for the characterization of erythrina alkaloids in *Erythrina edulis*

Preliminary floristic inventory of the Cloud Forest Organics reserve

## TALKS AND KEYNOTES

3rd International Biodynamic Research Conference: Cloud Forest Recovery: Endemic Species Agroforestry and Scientific Inquiry of Emerging Plants

HBSAAA Earth Day & Arbor Day Talk: Restoring Cloud Forest Biodiversity with Novel Wild Foods

Earth Day 2024 Conversation - Tapirs, Mycelium and Hallucinogenic Coffee

LINK TO TALK

## ARTICLES

LINK TO ARTICLE

Harvard Innovation Labs Announces 2023 Climate Circle Cohort

LINK TO ARTICLE

Craig Leon '85 Is Growing Native Foods in Ecuador's Cloud Forest

LINK TO ARTICLE

Restorative Approach to Agribusiness

Surface Water Analysis of the Cloud Forest Organics Reserve

Nutritional Analysis of Poroton Pods and Beans - Multianalytica

Preliminary Inventory of Orchids in the Cloud Forest Organics Reserve, by Marco F. Montero

Monitoring the effects of Ecological Restoration on Amphibian and Reptile Communities in the Cloud Forest Organics Reserve.

Mineral Water Comparison Study: Cloud Forest water vs. Evian and other leading water brands.

Annual Flow Measurement cycle in the Parada-larca River Micro-Basin, by P. Moreno

General Statistical Monitoring and Species Con-trol, by A. Maldonado, C. Leon, V. Torres

Growth Tecniques Investigation on Mushrooms from the Cloud Forest Organics Reserve

Plot 1 and 2 General Statistics on Growth, Survi-val Rates and Planting Techniques

Rapid Inventory of Birds in the Cloud Forest Or-ganics Reserve, by Manuel V. Sánchez

Annual Bat Survey in the Cloud Forest Organics Reserve, by Andrea Caicedo-Luna

Cloud Forest Organics Reserve Managment Plan, by C. Leon and J. Palacios

# FILMS

## Environmental Education


## Crystal Frog
2025

We completed *Crystal Frog* in January 2025, basically documenting our story. It' s been challenging to explain in words why we avoid trendy bio-economy agroforestry models for our venture, and what we are experiencing on the site as nature helps to guide us. So we made this film, and it's resonating at international film festivals, from the **Oscar-qualifying AmDocs where it was an official selection, to FICAA in Mexico and Delhi Shorts International Film Festivals, where it is receiving awards for environmental impact.** In Armenia, it's been nominated for the John Burton Conservation Award, and in Ecuador it won **Best National Production 2025**.

**LINK TO TRAILER**

## FILM AWARDS

BEST DOCUMENTARY
**14th Delhi Shorts International Film Festival-25**
New Delhi, India

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BEST ENVIRONMENTAL FILM
FICAA
2025

# FILM FESTIVALS CRYSTAL FROG HAS PARTICIPATED




















# Videos Speak

[LINK TO FILM]

With the principal aim of taking our discoveries and learnings beyond the borders of the Cloud Forest Organics reserve, we have cameras in the field, and everyone on the team has a dual role as photographer. This is a learning process, and we want to share that so those who follow will learn from our failures, share in our successes, and do things better than we are. This is about education and communications, motivation. We're thrilled that the snake in our short film Dipsas Speaks continues to have a voice, **winning Audience Favorite and Most Creative Film at the Oxford University's Museum of Natural History screening in October 2025.**





2026 +

*Maxillaria calantha*

**We face two worlds as we enter 2026 and look beyond the horizon.**

In our cloud forest world of emerging plants and fungi on reforestation test plots, we are accompanied by the harmonious sounds of more bird species and wildlife making their debut on our field cameras. Life in recovering cloud forest is more vibrant with each passing day. They are proving completely recoverable.

We're expecting the Woolly Tapirs to have offspring next year. We are humbled to see that animals, especially those at high risk of extinction, find comfort here and start to multiply. The Andean eagles seem more at home, flying and perching over us, protectors and protected.

In 2026, more white light cameras will bring the mystery of cloud forest nights to full color. Our planted trees will bear fruits for the first time. We expect our Crystal Frog research center to have the experimental kitchen completed, our on-site laboratory up, and and a new green house built for greater food self-sufficiency. All to be more welcoming to more researchers in a joint mission to discover ways to help cloud forests recover, because it is possible!

If all works out, our site will be expanded further, adding a 6th test plot to our current 5, with more rewilding sites under review. Further, our flagship test plot 1 that just 4 years ago was covered with invasive grasses, is becoming our Jurassic Food Park, replete with novel foods and medicines. Imagine a completely new food forestry model based on wild native foods for wildlife and people that welcomes wildlife, fungi and whatever plants emerge.

The other world, our environs, is exasperating. While we work fast to reforest, deforestation continues globally. The Amazon basin is in deep trouble, the beseiged cloud forests above that provide water and life unprotected. Ensuing impact from cloud forest loss is palpable. Rivers are changing course, mudslides and landslides are the norm, roads, bridges destroyed. Lives and biodiversity lost. This juxtaposition of disaster and hope is our challenge and our muse.

Cloud forests, now 90% gone, are not going down without a fight and we fight with them! We invite you who are reading this to assure that methods are developed, scientifically studied and shared for replication. **Thank you for supporting tangible and what are proving to be effective efforts to protect and recover cloud forests.**

Craig

Craig Daniel Leon

# WE NEED YOUR HELP

**NEW ADDRESS**

*To support our work, please scan this barcode to make an online donation. Checks can be sent to:*

***Jocotoco Conservation Foundation***
***Att: Cloud Forest Restoration Project***
***P.O. Box 496, Garrett Park, MD 20896***

*Please write Cloud Forest Restoration on lower left of check.*

*You will receive a tax-deduction letter from the Jocotoco Conservation Foundation, a 501 (c) 3 non-profit.*
*EIN: 83-2027203*

## DONATE LINK

**CONTACT**
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