NEWSLETTER

9 – February 2026

To our readers and fellow lovers of trees and nature,

2025 was a special year for our Foundation as we celebrated our 20th anniversary. Although the Foundation was created in 2005, our work truly gained momentum from 2018 onwards with the recruitment of a dedicated team, the launch of our website, the creation of our logo, the adoption of a renewed strategy, and the opening of regular calls for proposal.

To mark this anniversary, we invited our partners to share images and short testimonials from the field. Many responded, and we are deeply grateful. These contributions were brought together in a short video highlighting tree conservation efforts around the world.

This milestone also offered an opportunity to reflect and assess our collective impact over the past two decades. Our impact report provides a clearer picture of what our partners have achieved on the ground. Measuring impact is essential but also complex. We recognize that there is still room for improvement. Strengthening this work will remain a key priority for us in 2026.

2025 was also a record year in terms of the number of new projects we supported. Our support continues to grow, which is great news given the challenges and the thousands of tree species threatened with extinction.

Looking ahead, 2026 is expected to be a challenging year and we will continue to support our long-term partners while also developing new collaborations. Several of the projects we fund are entering their third phase, highlighting that nature conservation, and tree conservation in particular, requires patience and long-term commitment.

I hope 2026 has got off to a great start for you. I wish you a year full of personal success, as well as achievements for our beautiful planet, its majestic trees, and its magnificent forests.

Jean-Christophe Vié
Director General

ACTIVITIES OF THE FOUNDATION

Celebrating 20 Years of the Foundation: To celebrate 20 years, our Foundation chose to give a voice to our beneficiaries. Their stories highlight the journeys, changes and the impact made possible over the years. Watch the video here.

New projects : A total of 44 new projects have been selected for funding since the publication of our last newsletter in January 2025. Every year, the Foundation keeps identifying new projects and organisations that are implementing impactful *in situ* threatened tree conservation but also renews its support to some existing projects to consolidate their activities and increase their impact on the ground. The latest projects are listed here. A detailed description of all projects and an updated interactive map showing their location are available on our website.

Calls for proposals : Our last call for proposals focused on Latin America and the Caribbean region. It generated a lot of interest. Given the large number of high quality applications received, the selection process, was highly competitive. This February, the Foundation has opened a new call for proposals for the Mediterranean region. All details are available on this page, and the deadline for applying is March 25th.

Improving tree planting practices: Planting the right tree at the right place for the right purpose : In October 2025, at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Abu Dhabi, Members adopted a landmark motion responding to global concern over large-scale, monoculture tree-planting schemes that can harm biodiversity and ecosystem integrity. It calls for the use of native and genetically diverse species, the protection of natural forests, and clear distinction between plantations and natural forests. Click here to read the motion. This motion should help addressing the growing concerns about tree planting highlighted in this article commenting on a recent paper published in Nature Communications and perfectly portrayed in this French documentary - "Planter à tout prix".

Impact : The Foundation asks all its beneficiaries to quantify their impact as precisely as possible, using a set of common indicators. The combined impact of all the projects supported by the Foundation is calculated every year and increases year on year. In addition, this year, for the 20th anniversary of the Foundation, we calculated its overall cumulative impact : **more than 1,900 threatened tree species benefited from *in situ* conservation action in 62 countries.**

Many thanks to our 886 partner organisations for their work in favor of threatened trees and forests around the world, often under difficult conditions. We hope that these overall results will give them extra energy to continue their work.

Here are some figures detailing our cumulative impact between 2005 and 2025:

Direct actions at species and habitat level :

- 1,917 threatened tree species conserved *in situ* in 62 countries
- 975 threatened tree species conserved *ex situ* in 35 countries
- 1,752,528 seedlings of threatened tree species planted and/or protected *in situ* in 59 countries
- 1,597,036 seedlings of non-threatened tree species planted and/or protected *in situ* in 29 countries
- 608,820 mature individuals of threatened tree species planted and/or protected *in situ* in 62 countries
- 1,356,383 hectares of production landscape under enhanced management in 37 countries
- 3,750,999 hectares of protected areas under enhanced management in 62 countries
- 74,621 hectares newly protected in 22 countries
- 7,066 hectares brought under ecological restoration in 50 countries
- 2,102,837 hectares of KBA benefited from enhanced management in 29 countries

Threat reduction :

- 25,569 people benefited from alternative livelihoods activities
- 552,397 people were targeted by concrete awareness raising actions
- 2,255,303 hectares are better protected against illegal logging in 29 countries

Enabling conditions :

- 886 organisations have improved their organisational capacity
- 76,474 people directly benefited from education and training activities
- 47,817 tree species assessments were published on the IUCN Red List
- 7,150 species descriptions were published in various floras
- 174 action plans for the conservation of threatened trees were developed
- 339 scientific papers were published

NEWS FROM THE PROJECTS

The keys to successful tree-planting

The world has seen a global surge in tree-planting and other restoration initiatives. Governments have made eye-watering commitments to planting trees as a means of progressing towards their targets. The citizen-led aspect of this approach was powerful, with people able to support tree planting simply by changing their search engine and social media influencers pledging to plant trees for every new follower they gained. In this article, Alicky Davey, Fauna & Flora's Plant Conservation Programme Manager, reflects on the benefits and pitfalls of tree-planting as a means of addressing the biodiversity and climate crises.

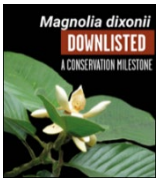
Small grants are key to a successful next generation of conservationists

Large numbers of early-career conservationists and fledgling organizations are poised to implement solutions to the biodiversity crisis, but the prevailing funding logic isn't adapting fast enough to support them. Small grants can make a huge difference in this moment, as they are fast, flexible and comprehensible to people on the ground doing local conservation work, especially when unhinged from onerous restrictions and reporting requirements. Based on the experience of the Zoological Society of London's (ZSL) EDGE of Existence program this commentary explains why we must support the next generation of conservation leaders to ensure they have viable career paths that do not come at the expense of burnout.

Connecting rainforests, communities and livelihoods

The Endane Biodiversity Corridor project in Sri Lanka rewilds former tea gardens to reconnect fragmented rainforests, which helps biodiversity thrive while also providing community livelihood support through a partnership with local communities. The project aims to serve as a model for integrating rainforest conservation and threatened tree species conservation with sustainable development and community well-being. Click here to watch the documentary showcasing their work and here to learn more about the rediscovery of an endemic rainforest giant, *Shorea ovalifolia*, thought to be Extinct in the Wild.

Moving Away from the Brink of Extinction



In a world where dire news about the environment is far too common, Ecuador's Chocó rainforest offers a sign of hope. *Magnolia dixonii* has been officially downlisted from Critically Endangered to Endangered on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. This remarkable shift reflects years of coordinated action to protect habitat, restore forests, and bring a species back from the edge. Click here to learn more about this good news.

Ebony & Ivory

Critically Endangered African forest elephants preferentially eat fruits and disperse seeds of carbon-dense trees, including the highly valued and threatened African ebony. The illegal ivory trade has led to severe declines in elephant populations, but the long-term impacts on tree species are poorly understood. Using a comprehensive dataset including age-class, spatial, genetic, and experimental data, across a hunting pressure gradient, this study shows

how paired declines in elephant and ebony populations are linked by a previously unrecognized mutualism in which elephant dung protects ebony seeds against seed predators. Click here to access the full article.

Viveros Hermanos

The Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta threatened tree species recovery project led by Fundación Bachaqueros aims at rescuing and protecting the few individuals and last populations of 18 globally threatened tree species in the Colombian northern Caribbean region, still surviving after generations of human pressure. Their nurseries focus on cultivating native and threatened tree species in collaboration with local communities, reviving ancient wisdom and sustainable practices to work harmoniously with nature. Click here to watch a short documentary about their conservation work.

Saving the threatened trees of Juan Fernandez Archipelago

The Juan Fernández Archipelago is located 700km west of the Chilean continent and, due to its isolation, has evolved the greatest density of endemic plant diversity on the planet. Island Conservation jointly with their local partners and the park authorities aim to advance the conservation of the threatened cloud forests of Robinson Crusoe Island in Juan Fernandez Archipelago and its endemic tree species through multiple complementary activities such as the facilitation of natural forest regeneration through invasive species management and exclusion of herbivores. Click here to learn more about the achievements of the first phase of this project.

Seeds of Hope

The Pepper Bark Tree (*Warburgia salutaris*) listed as Endangered, both globally and nationally in South Africa, due to illegal and unsustainable harvesting for its bark, is commonly used in traditional medicine, including many remedies that are used to treat influenza, diarrhoea, burns, and other ailments. Endangered Wildlife Trust has worked hand in hand with local communities, including with Traditional Health Practitioners to implement targeted habitat protection and restoration work to conserve wild Pepper Barks. Click here to learn more about the results of this project.

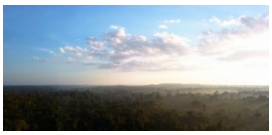
Integrating Madagascar's Sapotaceae into national reforestation programmes

The taxonomic revision of the Sapotaceae of Madagascar is a research project undertaken by the Geneva Conservatory and Botanical Garden over several years. Initially financed by the Swiss National Science Foundation (2017-2019), then by Fondation Franklinia (2019-2023), it has made it possible to revise, circumscribe and map nearly 180 tree species, half of which are new to science, and to assess their risk of extinction: nearly three-quarters are threatened (EN or CR). The present project implemented jointly by the Geneva Conservatory and Botanical Garden and the Malagasy NGO Famelona proposes to capitalise on these past results by implementing a concrete conservation project for these threatened tree species (CR and EN) occurring in Madagascar's protected areas and orphan sites. Click here to listen to a podcast in French on this amazing group of trees.

Seeds of Survival

With only six known specimens in forest reserves that have almost disappeared, *Millettia sacleuxii* is on the brink of extinction. However, the recent discovery of two surviving *Millettia sacleuxii* "mother trees" sparks hope for the recovery of this very rare tree. The Seeds of Survival project implemented by PAMS Foundation in the Nguru mountains in Tanzania integrates forest restoration, agroforestry and forest protection. It seeks to restore biodiversity, ecological connectivity, and ecosystem functioning while improving local livelihoods, resilience, and food security. Click here to learn more about this very rare tree species.

Save trees to save gibbons



Wild Earth Allies is conserving threatened tree species in Cambodia's Prey Lang Wildlife Sanctuary so that healthy forest ecosystems support thriving wildlife populations and sustainable livelihoods of Indigenous Kuy communities. Through this project, natural habitats will be restored using a mix of seeds collected from threatened trees, but also from elephant dung, and from trees that are part of the pileated gibbon's diet. Click here to better understand the connection between threatened trees, gibbons and people.

Magnolia recovery in China & Projeto Cumaru in Brazil

Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) aims at scaling up the conservation of the world's most threatened tree species by implementing concrete *in situ* conservation actions in 20 countries and by empowering various actors of the civil society, especially botanic gardens, to act as tree conservation leaders. Click here to learn more about their impact on *Magnolia omeiensis* (CR) in China and here on *Amburana cearensis* (EN), a plant essential to the ecological balance of the Caatinga biome in Brazil.

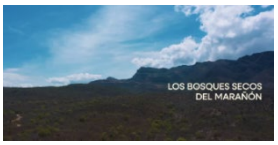
Future tree conservation leaders

EDGE species are Evolutionarily Distinct and Globally Endangered, meaning they are unique species at risk of extinction. This project implemented by Zoological Society of London (ZSL) in partnership with Kew Gardens catalyses locally led conservation actions to protect multiple EDGE tree species by training and mentoring future conservation leaders. In 2025 one of the ZSL EDGE fellows, Reshu Bashyal, received the Whitley Fund for Nature Award for her work on addressing the illegal trade in orchids and Maire's Yew (*Taxus mairei* - EN) in Nepal, which has been driven by soaring international demand for their medicinal and ornamental properties. Click here to learn more about her work.

An army of fungi to save Endangered trees

This project led by the University of Rosario aimed at improving the *in situ* conservation of *Trigonobalanus excelsa*, known also as the Colombian Black Oak, an Endangered endemic and relict tree species of Colombia, by aligning local management plans in private reserves with regional conservation plans. In addition, propagation protocols have been established, including applied research on the role of symbiotic mycorrhiza to increase survival rates. Permanent conservation plots have also been established to strengthen species monitoring efforts and *in situ* conservation on the long term. Click here to learn more about how researchers in South America have been recruiting an army of fungi to save this Endangered tree species.

Tree conservation in the dry forests of the Marañon River Valley



This project led by Nature and Culture International (NCI) aims to promote the conservation of endemic and Critically Endangered species of the dry forests of the Marañon River Valley in Peru (*Parkinsonia peruviana, Cedrela kuelapensis, Esenbeckia cornuta* and *Piptadenia weberbaueri*), as well as two endemic and Endangered shrub species (*Caesalpinia celendiniana* and *Mimosa lamolina*) through seed collection, nursery propagation and reforestation inside and outside protected areas. Click here to watch their short documentary showcasing their conservation work.

Almost half of Mesoamerican tree species are threatened with extinction

As part of the Global Tree Assessment, comprehensive assessments of Mesoamerican trees have been completed. This region has a large tree diversity, with over 4,000 species found only in that part of the world. However, there has been an extensive land cover change, and until recently there was relatively little information available about the conservation status of the region's tree flora. The study shows that 46% of trees endemic to Mesoamerica are at risk of extinction, with the main drivers of those declines identified as agriculture and logging. The data collected can be used to prioritise the urgent conservation actions needed and influence policy to make sure these species are protected for generations to come. Click here to access the paper presenting the results.

Protecting Socotran jewels from extinction

Frankincense trees (genus *Boswellia*), economically important species that are intimately intertwined with human history since millennia, are currently threatened on Socotra Island, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The first IUCN Red List update of 2025 reveals that five species of frankincense have unfortunately moved from Vulnerable to Endangered, one from Vulnerable to Critically Endangered, and three species have been assessed for the first time as Critically Endangered. Since 2020, Fondation Franklinia has been supporting conservation work on the ground by local dedicated people using several approaches to protect the seedlings; it is not good news to see that the situation keeps deteriorating. To save these species, it is urgent to reduce grazing impacts and focus on traditional sustainable grazing practices. Click here to learn more about the challenges to defend these iconic tree species against climate change and hungry goats and here to read an interview of the on-site manager of the Socotra Endangered tree project, recently published in the journal Nature.

Global Conservation Consortium Magnolia (GCCM)

2024 was an important year for the Global Conservation Consortium for Magnolia (GCCM), with many opportunities to showcase the successes and efforts of the Consortium on a global scale. From Singapore to Costa Rica, the GCCM joined conferences and events to increase awareness about Magnolia conservation worldwide. The GCCM also continued to grow last year, with new Affiliates and Species Stewards joining. Consortium members continued to advance important work for magnolias, including updating IUCN Red List assessments and launching several new conservation action plans. Read more in their 2024 Annual Review.

Conserving orphaned threatened Malagasy tree species

Missouri Botanical Garden in partnership with other NGOs in Madagascar aims to develop and implement a novel approach to improve the conservation status of 20 CR and EN tree species that are not represented in any protected area. The forests in which these species survive are often small and in almost all cases the habitat is highly threatened. The project proposes an unprecedented approach in Madagascar complementing ex-situ conservation and integrating threatened species into reforestation and restoration projects in their native landscape. To learn more about their progress to date, click here.

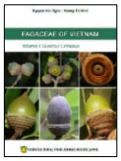
Threatened trees conservation in Ghana

In October 2025, the Forest Research Institute of Ghana (CSIR-FORIG) with the support of Botanic Gardens Conservation International organised the 2nd national stakeholder workshop on threatened trees conservation in Ghana. The goal of this two-day workshop was to review the progress made to date toward the implementation of the Conservation Action Plan for Ghana's Threatened Trees published in 2022, enhance coordination efforts between the various actors currently implementing conservation actions on the ground, provide training opportunities to the participants and officially launch the Ghana Threatened Tree portal. You can learn more about the work of the Ghana Threatened Trees Consortium in this newsletter.

Restoring one of Indonesia's last lowland rainforests

Indonesia's rainforests are particularly vulnerable to deforestation, with pressure coming from a variety of sources including the timber industry, oil palm plantations, exotic animal trade, and human settlements. PT Restorasi Ekosistem Indonesia, with the support from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, is expanding its forest restoration efforts funded by our Fondation since 2021 in Hutan Harapan, southeastern Sumatra. Within the next decade, they aim to transform a former logging concession into healthy regenerating lowland rainforest. Click here to learn more about their work.

New book on the Oaks of Vietnam



The oak trees of the genus *Quercus* have been a subject of study for centuries, and this book by Nguyen Van Ngoc and Hoang Thi Binh of the Dalat University provides a comprehensive guide to the species of *Quercus* found in Vietnam. With its rich biodiversity and unique cultural heritage, Vietnam is home to many species of oak trees that are of great ecological and cultural significance.

Documentary "Verde Resistencia"

The documentary "Verde Resistencia" was produced to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the San Jorge Botanical Garden and to provide a detailed account of the work and activities developed within the Franklinia-funded project in Colombia. One of the most notable highlights is the rediscovery of the species *Gustavia latifolia*, after 150 years without scientific record. Another topic addressed in the documentary is the importance of protecting remnants of Tropical Dry Forest, one of the most threatened ecosystems in the country.

The Morton Arboretum is working with in-country partners to implement conservation projects to improve the conservation, sustainable management, and recovery of threatened tree species and ecosystems. Those projects respond to site-specific needs that seek to benefit ecosystems while supporting local communities. Click here to watch a short video of their programme Guardianes de los Àrboles and here to learn more about their montane cloud forest conservation.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS AND ARTICLES

- **Largest-ever INTERPOL operation against wildlife and forestry trafficking networks**

Nearly 20,000 live animals, all threatened or protected species, have been seized in a global operation against wildlife and forestry trafficking networks, jointly coordinated by INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization (WCO). Operation Thunder 2024 brought together police, customs, border control, forestry and wildlife officials from 138 countries and regions. Authorities arrested 365 suspects and identified six transnational criminal networks suspected of trafficking animals and plants protected by CITES. Timber cases represented the most significant seizures of this operation.

- **Half of France and Corsica's mountain forests threatened by climate change**

Despite an increase in forest area since the mid-19th century, the mountain forests of mainland France and Corsica are currently undergoing major changes due to multiple anthropogenic pressures, both local and global. The Red List of Ecosystems in France has assessed the mountain forests of mainland France and Corsica for the first time. Of the 19 ecosystems assessed according to IUCN criteria, 10 are threatened and 6 appear to be near threatened, mainly due to climate change. The article is in French.

- **The benefit of having small leaves**

If only trees could talk. It was with this premise in mind that Thierry Gauquelin, an ecologist specialising in Mediterranean forests, set out to recount the long life of a Moroccan Atlas juniper (*Juniperus thurifera*) that is over 500 years old. In this chapter (in French) of his novel “De mémoire d'arbre” (From the Memory of Trees), he tells us about the benefit that certain trees have in having small leaves.

- **A rainforest tree thrives on lightning strikes**

When struck by lightning, *Dipteryx oleifera* transfers the electrical discharge to its neighbours, which then eventually wither away. With less competition and more light, this tree species grows taller, live longer and disperses its seeds more effectively. The article is in French.

- **DNA sequencing used for a new collegial classification system**

The classification of plants has long been the result of the work of solitary experts, who grouped together plants that resembled each other. As a result, there were as many classifications as there were eminent botanists. Some common plants, such as lily of the valley, hyacinth and hackberry, were thus placed in different families depending on the author. For centuries, plants have constantly changed names, but this article (in French) explains why that is coming to an end. International collaboration between scientists and advances in DNA sequencing now make it possible to agree on classification.

- **Climate change inducing an earlier, shorter Canadian Arctic plant flowering season**

Many plant and animal species are shifting the timing of events (phenology) such as flowering in response to climate change. Yet in the Arctic, where climate change is proceeding most rapidly, the difficulty in studying phenology means that little is known about the extent of these shifts. The authors of this article examined 17,000 digitized specimens of plants from the Canadian Arctic to determine when flowering occurred and how flowering

time changed in response to temperature from 1899 to 2019. Most species shifted to earlier flowering, especially late-flowering species, causing a shorter flowering season overall, with potential implications for pollination and food webs. This work shows the importance of digitizing specimens to aid in research and inform conservation.

- **In the Pyrenees, the forest does not extend as high as the climate allows it to**

In the mountains, the climate shapes the distribution of vegetation. The higher you climb, the lower the temperatures become and the sparser the forests grow, eventually giving way to alpine meadows. The forest could extend much higher up the slopes of the Pyrenees, so why does it not venture further up? This phenomenon was already occurring before the effects of global warming were felt, so the explanation lies elsewhere. More in this article (in French).

- **Most of Earth's critical underground fungus is unprotected**

More than 90% of the planet's below-the-surface fungi are not found in protected parts of the globe, Nature and Science report. The find comes thanks to the world's first high-resolution global map of "mycorrhizal fungi"—mushrooms that form beneficial relationships with plant roots and bacteria. An interactive map called the Underground Atlas was created which will allow scientists, policymakers, and conservationists to explore mycorrhizal diversity anywhere on Earth. The tool could be used to identify high-priority areas for protection and restoration.

- **Why the Sycamore Gap tree provoked such strong emotional reactions**

The Sycamore Gap tree, also known as the Robin Hood tree or *Acer pseudoplatanus*, was a 120-year-old sycamore tree next to Hadrian's Wall near Crag Lough in Northumberland, England. It was deliberately cut down overnight by two men in 2023, since then convicted. For many, the tree symbolised British resilience, heritage and an enduring history. The public response was swift and intense, with widespread outrage and grief over the loss of this cultural landmark. A psychologist explains why the Sycamore Gap tree provoked such strong emotional reactions.

- **Global engineering effects of soil invertebrates on ecosystem functions**

The biogenic structures produced by termites, ants and earthworms provide key functions across global ecosystems. However, little is known about the drivers of the soil engineering effects caused by these small but important invertebrates at the global scale. This study shows that all three species groups increase soil macronutrient content, soil respiration and soil microbial and plant biomass compared with reference soils. The effect of termites on soil respiration and plant biomass, and the effect of earthworms on soil nitrogen and phosphorus content, increase with mean annual temperature and peak in the tropics. This study highlights the important roles of these invertebrate taxa in global biogeochemical cycles and ecosystem functions.

- **"America's tree" is missing**

Before the blight, the American chestnut (*Castanea dentata*, CR) was the dominant tree in hardwood forests from Maine to Missouri and Mississippi. The pathogen that killed off the American chestnut arrived in New York City before 1900, carried on Japanese chestnut saplings imported by horticulturalists for commercial sale. The blight spread inexorably through America's eastern forests and by mid-century, nearly every one of the 4 billion mature American chestnut trees in existence had fallen to the ground. From almost the moment the blight began, efforts were made to defeat it — first to save those billions of standing American chestnuts under dire threat, then to restore the species to its rightful place, using selective breeding and even genetically modified organisms.

- **How plants are able to remember stress without a brain**

Since their establishment on land 500 million years ago, plants have evolved ways to defend themselves against pests and diseases. One of their most fascinating abilities is to "remember" stressful encounters and use this memory to defend themselves. This phenomenon, called immune priming, is similar to how vaccines help humans build immunity but is based on different mechanisms. This article explains how they do it without a brain.

- **Amazonian deforestation makes the wet season wetter, and the dry season drier**

Clearing of Amazonian forest boosts rainfall during the wet season, but reduces it in the dry season, when the ecosystem needs water most, highlighting the need to prevent further clearance of a climate-regulating

environment. This article provides an analysis of satellite data and climate simulations that uncovers seasonal rainfall changes in the Amazon after deforestation.

- **New Asian tree species**

Two new species of Fagaceae were recently described in Asia: *Lithocarpus tapanuliensis*, a new stone oak from northern Sumatra; and *Castanopsis corallocarpus,* a new species from Malaysia**.**

- **The role of protected areas in tropical tree conservation**

Protected areas (PAs) are key tools to prevent extinction and preserve ecosystem functions. In this study, 433 Dipterocarpaceae species were used as a proxy for threatened and ecologically important trees to determine the role of PAs in tree conservation and the potential shortfalls. The study showed that Southeast Asia is not only the centre of diversity for Dipterocarpaceae, but also a major hotspot of threat. Borneo emerged as the Dipterocarpaceae taxonomic family's main centre of diversity, while Malaysia, Brunei, and Thailand were found to have a disproportionately high number of protected areas relevant to Dipterocarpaceae conservation. The study also identified "Strict Nature Reserves" and National Parks as key refuges for threatened Dipterocarpaceae species.

- **What do trees remember?**

For trees, memory is not a metaphor but a biological reality, written into their cells. One of the most remarkable forms this takes is epigenetic memory: the ability of a tree to record its life experiences and allow those experiences to shape its future, without changing the sequence of its DNA. A creative collaboration between tree scientists and artists imagined a legal case set in the year 2030 between a claimant, an oak seeded in the early 19th century (in whose shadow the case was heard), and the UK government.

- **Forest bathing keeps lungs healthy**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Italian scientists documented something interesting: in areas with more trees per capita, the number and severity of COVID-19 cases were lower than in places with fewer trees. Wooded environments release organic compounds that seem to improve respiratory health, but the magnitude and mechanism of the effect remains unclear. This article is part of a growing body of research around the world investigating whether time spent in forests and nature can provide protection from infections.

- **Diversity and composition of tree communities**

Ecologists have long debated the factors that govern the diversity and composition of tree communities. Different regions of the tropics vary in overall tree species diversity, with the tropical Americas exhibiting strikingly higher regional tree species richness than Africa and Southeast Asia. This research investigated whether these differences also occur at the local scale, and whether the environmental conditions associated with tree species richness are consistent across tropical regions despite highly dissimilar species pools.

TRAINING, RESOURCES, EVENTS AND AWARDS

- **Reverse the Red Day**

Reverse the Red Day was on February 7th. It is an annual opportunity to celebrate all the work that the nature conservation community is doing to reverse trends of biodiversity loss. It will be an opportunity to discuss accelerating action, improving strategy regarding species recovery efforts, and aligning with national species recovery targets. To learn more about Reverse the Red, click here. You will find information on upcoming webinars on different topics such as "Evidence of Success".

- **IUCN launches new suite of courses**

The IUCN Academy is pleased to announce seven new open access, self-paced educational resources designed to empower leaders with the latest conservation insights and tools to take action for Nature and People and enhance professional development. You can explore these courses on the IUCN Academy website.

- **IUCN NL launches call for proposals for land acquisition**

The IUCN NL Land Acquisition Fund enables local nature organisations worldwide to secure important wildlife habitat by purchasing or long-term land leasing. Since its foundation in 2001, the fund has helped safeguard more than 320,000 hectares of threatened nature. The fund supports: land purchase; long-term land leases; and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Pacific region. The application deadline is May 1st, 2026. More information is available here.

- **CEPF launches a call for proposals for the Indo-Burma Hotspot**

Applications are now open for the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund call for proposals for the Indo-Burma Hotspot. Funding is available through small grants (up to US$50,000) and large grants (US$50,000–US$250,000). Eligible countries include Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam. The application deadline is March 16th, 2026. More information is available here.

———