

Couple replant entire forest to give homes to 500 endangered species

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Couple replanted an entire forest after realising all its trees had been cut down and the wildlife had gone, giving homes to 500+ endangered species.

Renowned Brazilian photographer Sebastião Salgado returned home to Minas Gerais, Brazil, in 1994, expecting to see the tropical paradise he knew from childhood.

However, he was met with a horrifying sight; the land he knew and cherished had been destroyed completely, with only about 0.5 per cent of the land covered in trees.

As per [The Guardian](#), Salgado told a meeting of religious leaders discussing climate change that he had just returned from a traumatic assignment reporting on the genocide in Rwanda when he discovered the forest.

He told them:

The land was as sick as I was – everything was destroyed. Only about 0.5 per cent of the land was covered in trees.

Then my wife had a fabulous idea to replant this forest. And when we began to do that, then all the insects and birds and fish returned and, thanks to this increase of the trees I, too, was reborn – this was the most important moment.

Salgado and his family set up the [Instituto Terra](#) shortly afterwards and have since planted more than two million trees, transforming the environment and giving homes to 500+ endangered species, [Science Insanity](#) reports.

The first seed was planted in December 1999; the couple hired around 24 workers in the beginning but were later joined by numerous volunteers over the years. Working day and night, the group uprooted invasive weeds and planted new seedlings.

Soon enough, tropical trees native to the region started flourishing in the area and they received a donation of one hundred thousand saplings which gave rise to a dense forest.

Salgado's forest has resulted in more rainfall falling in the area, as well as cooler weather, which has brought a drastic and desirable change in the climate.

In doing so, the photographer says he has found one answer to climate change – as well as creative inspiration.

Salgado explained:

Perhaps we have a solution. There is a single being which can transform CO2 to oxygen, which is the tree. We need to replant the forest.

You need forest with native trees, and you need to gather the seeds in the same region you plant them or the serpents and the termites won't come. And if you plant forests that don't belong, the animals don't come there and the forest is silent.

We need to listen to the words of the people on the land. Nature is the earth and it is other beings and if we don't have some kind of spiritual return to our planet, I fear that we will be compromised.

The site now has 293 species of trees and has rejuvenated approximately 1,500 acres of tropical forest.

Hats off to Salgado, his wife, and all those involved in this incredible project!

Source: <https://www.unilad.co.uk/news/couple-replant-entire-forest-to-give-homes-to-500-endangered-species/>