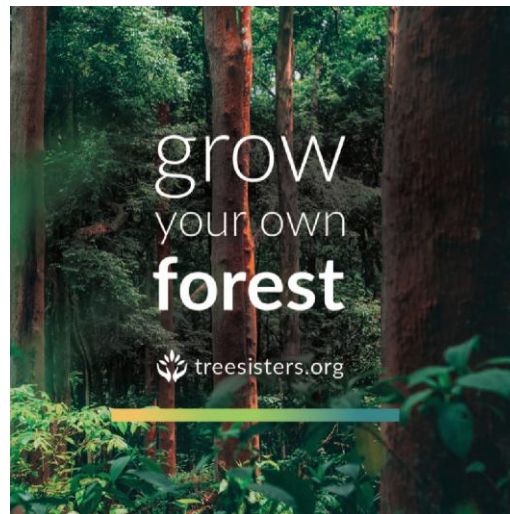


# FEMALE FIRST

## Seven benefits of growing your own tropical forest

20 November 2019



“Grow Your Own Forest is a simple way for women all around the world to take direct action to cool our world,” says Pollyanna Darling, Community Engagement Coordinator for TreeSisters. “In a world finally waking up to climate emergency, we’re inviting women everywhere to join our movement to make giving back to Nature a new normal. We want to help create a transformation within human culture where ecological restoration becomes as fundamental to every human life as consumption currently is.”

The Grow Your Own Forest campaign coincides with the recent warning from 11,000 plus scientists in the journal *Bioscience* on 5 November that “planet Earth is facing a climate emergency” and that an “immense increase” in efforts is needed to combat the climate crisis. The vital steps recommended by the collective of scientists to prevent climate meltdown include increasing reforestation “at enormous scales”.

When you Grow Your Own Forest with TreeSisters, you’re making a powerful choice to restore groundwater, protect endangered species, reduce poverty, and sequester carbon. You’ll be restoring forests in Kenya, Cameroon, Brazil, Mozambique, Madagascar, India and Nepal. Making this choice values the children of every species and the climate they will inherit. It says ‘I care’.

When you donate to TreeSisters, their system converts your donations into numbers of trees planted, so that you can track the scale of your impact whilst discovering fascinating facts about the projects you’re supporting. When you share your forest on social media, your friends can donate too and help grow your forest, extending your impact. Just set up your account and watch your forest grow.

In response to devastating fires and forest destruction, TreeSisters is now funding a food forest project in the Amazon, supporting the Ashaninka tribe to maintain their economy and traditional way of life. Another new project in Mozambique, assisting the restoration of decimated mangrove forests, will also sustain indigenous fishing communities and protect threatened ecosystems.

TreeSisters is a feminine response to climate change. Instead of looking to technology to sequester excess atmospheric carbon, it restores and regenerates the mechanisms Nature herself created to do the job perfectly: forests. Empowering a global network of women, the

UK-based charity has to date funded over 6.5 million trees through its projects. TreeSisters is aiming for a million trees a month by the end of 2020 as the next step on their path to fund the planting of 1 billion trees annually through monthly, one-time and partnership donations.

While reforestation has been widely hailed as the most effective way to slow climate change, scientists assert that focusing on tropical rainforests is particularly efficient. Located around the Equator in the forest belt between the tropics of Cancer and Capricorn, tropical forests have generally high average temperature and annual rainfall, for all or part of the year. While critical to life on Earth, they are under severe threat from climate change, subsistence agriculture and corporate interests like mining, logging and broad scale agriculture.

Marking the launch of TreeSisters 'Grow Your Own Forest' campaign, Pollyanna Darling shares seven benefits of growing your own tropical forest.

**Help us breathe:** Tropical rainforests comprise just 6% of the Earth's surface but produce 40% of its oxygen![1]

**Sequester carbon fast!** Tropical trees sequester carbon three times as fast as temperate trees. They draw down and store 95% of all global tree-based CO<sub>2</sub> from the air. Of all the Earth's forests, tropical forests have the greatest potential to draw down carbon from the atmosphere.

**Improve soil health:** Biodiverse tropical forests create a huge amount of organic material (leaves, seeds and branches) which improves soil health. Forest wildlife and other small animals, some of whom live in these trees, add extra nutrients to this organic matter, further improving the health of the soil. All of this creates the conditions that life needs to thrive. Did you know that the top six inches of rainforest soil is some of the most alive and nutrient rich on the planet?

**Cool down the climate:** Tropical forests seed clouds, making them particularly good at cooling our world. They do this by transforming solar energy into water vapour, which in turn becomes reflective clouds that reflect sunlight back into space. Tropical forests are three times more effective in cooling down climate than boreal or temperate forests[2].

**Create biodiversity:** Tropical forests are incredibly biodiverse and are home to 170,000 of the world's 250,000 plant species and an estimated 50% of all plant and animal species. Some of our intact tropical rainforests have evolved over 65 million years and are more biodiverse per hectare than temperate and arid forests. One hectare of rainforest may contain up to 42,000 different insect species, over 300 different tree species, and 1,500 species of higher plants.

**Sustain communities:** Planting in the tropics has a positive impact on local human communities by: providing sustainable employment opportunities and revenue streams that alleviate extreme poverty; restoring biodiversity and watersheds; improving soil quality for healthy food production; and spreading education about why trees matter.

**Provide medicines:** About a quarter of all medicines used by humans come from tropical rainforests. The severe pressure on these forests results in around 137 rainforest-dwelling species (animals and plants) becoming extinct every single day, according to Harvard biologist Edward Wilson. In some cases, we are losing potential medicines before they've even been found, as it's estimated that only 1% of the flora and fauna of the rainforests have been tested for medically active compounds.

Source: <https://www.femalefirst.co.uk/features/seven-benefits-of-growing-your-own-tropical-forest-1218538.html>