Researchers say we should regrow our rainforests to fight climate change

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Throughout Central and South America, Africa and Southeast Asia, there are over 100 million hectares of lost lowland tropical rain forests that have ideal conditions for reforestation.

That's according to a peer-reviewed report released yesterday.

Restoration hotspots

Brazil, Indonesia, Madagascar, India, and Colombia have the largest number of restoration hotspots.

Meanwhile, Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, Togo, South Sudan, and Madagascar are home to the areas presenting, on average, the best restoration opportunities.

"Restoring tropical forests is fundamental to the planet's health, now and for generations to come," said lead author Pedro Brancalion in a press release. "For the first time, our study helps governments, investors and others seeking to restore global tropical moist forests to determine precise locations where restoring forests is most viable, enduring and beneficial. Restoring forests is a must do — and it's doable."

The study, written by 12 authors is titled *Global restoration opportunities in tropical rainforest landscapes.* It was released yesterday in the journal *Science Advances.*

FCherrapunjee Rain Forests in India. Source: Ashwin Kumar/Flickr

Satellite rainforest images

Using high-resolution images from satellites, the researchers assessed and rated all tropical lands worldwide that retained less than 90% of their forest cover — they did so in 1 km blocks. Those that scored in the top 10% are considered restoration hotspots — areas where it would be the least costly and most beneficial to undergo restoration.

Encouragingly, 73% of the restoration hotspots were found in countries that have already made restoration commitments as part of the Bonn Challenge, a worldwide effort to regrow 150 million hectares of the world's deforested land by 2020, and 350 million hectares by 2030.

Collaborating with the agriculture industry

Unfortunately, it's not always as easy as going to these locations and planting trees: "Restoration involves far more than simply planting trees," co-author Robin Chazdon said. "It starts with the need for mutually beneficial agreements with those currently using the land and doesn't end until forests host the rich diversity of plant and animal life that make them so awe-inspiring and valuable. But, fortunately, studies show it doesn't take long for the benefits of new forests to kick-in."

While increasing reforestation efforts will greatly help meet climate goals, the researchers from the University of São Paulo did say that it cannot replace the urgent need for a reduction in emissions.

Source:https://interestingengineering.com/researchers-say-we-should-regrow-our-rainforests-to-fight-climate-change