

HSP's Cloud Forest Restoration Project



Program manager Lesly Bravo and Citizen Scientist Lead Santiago López Guachiac take a short break during a Tree-planting drive with members of the Chuicutama Forest Guardians



Walnut (*Juglans olanchana*)

Juglans olanchana is a native canopy tree whose deep roots stabilize volcanic slopes, enrich soils, and support the belowground communities that cloud forests depend upon. Its nuts sustain wildlife that disperses seed and sustains the food web. Culturally prized for its edible fruit and hardwood, walnut offers communities a sustainable alternative to extractive harvest—and its inclusion in restoration reflects the core principle that a forest is a community of species, not a monoculture of trunks.



Aguacatillo (*Persea caerulea*)

The aguacatillo, a native canopy to mid-canopy tree in Guatemala's highlands, anchors the food web that pine monocultures neglect. Its lipid-rich fruits sustain birds and mammals, which in turn disperse its seed and sustain forest regeneration. Its roots stabilize Sololá's steep slopes while its litter feeds the soil. As a wild relative of the avocado, it also carries local significance. Including it embodies restoration's core principle: rebuilding a living community, not planting commercial stems.



Wild cherry (*Prunus salicifolia*).

The wild cherry, a native mid-canopy tree of Guatemala's highlands, provisions Sololá's food web with fleshy fruits that birds and mammals disperse widely, seeding natural regeneration. Its roots bind erosion-prone slopes while its litter enriches soil biota. Locally valued for its edible fruit and fine wood, it exemplifies restoration's guiding principle: reconstituting an interdependent ecological community rather than planting commercially convenient stems.



Pino Blanco (*Pinus ayacahuite*)

The pino blanco, once dominant across the Sololá highlands, is a pioneer conifer that quickly stabilizes eroded slopes, captures cloud moisture, and safeguards watersheds feeding downstream communities. Historically prized by highland Maya for timber and identity, its overharvest hastened forest collapse. Yet restoration reclaims it not as a monoculture crop but as one interdependent member of a recovering community—the pioneer that opens ground for the slower oaks and broadleaves succession ultimately demands.



Capulín Cherry (*Prunus salicifolia*)

Known locally as capulín—a Nahuatl-derived name distinct from its broader "wild cherry" designation—this native mid-canopy tree provisions Sololá's food web with fleshy fruits that birds and mammals disperse widely, driving natural regeneration. Its roots stabilize erosion-prone slopes while its litter enriches soil biota. Long prized for edible fruit and fine wood, it embodies restoration's guiding logic: reconstituting an interdependent ecological community rather than planting commercially convenient stems.



Dodder (*Cuscuta* species)

Known locally as *cabello de ángel* or *fideillo*, this native parasitic vine complicates any tidy narrative of restoration. It draws nourishment from living hosts, threatening the very seedlings a young project must establish, yet it belongs to the community it burdens. Restoration honors interdependence without romanticizing it: dodder is not a species to promote but one to monitor and tolerate in moderation, controlled where it endangers priority plantings.

