**P R E S S R E L E A S E**

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**Natural regeneration often ignored as a viable land-use option**

*Biotropica’s* latest Special Issue published online **Monday 21 November, 2016** explores “Natural regeneration in the context of large-scale forest and landscape restoration in the tropics”

**Large-scale and long-term restoration efforts are urgently needed to reverse historical global trends of deforestation and forest degradation in the tropics**. Restoration of forests within landscapes offers multiple social, economic, and environmental benefits that enhance lives of local people, mitigate effects of climate change, increase food security, and safeguard soil and water resources. Despite rapidly growing knowledge regarding the extent and feasibility of natural regeneration and the environmental and economic benefits of naturally regenerating forests in the tropics, **tree planting remains the major focus of restoration programs. and natural regeneration is often ignored as a viable land-use option**. In *Biotropica’s* Special Section, the authors Robin Chazdon and Maria Uriarte assemble a set of 16 original papers that provide an overview of the ecological, economic, and social dimensions of forest and landscape restoration (FLR), a relatively new approach to forest restoration that aims to regain ecological integrity and enhance human well-being in deforested or degraded forest landscapes. The papers describe how spontaneous (passive) and assisted natural regeneration can contribute to achieving multiple social and ecological benefits. Forest and landscape restoration is centered on the people who live and work in the landscape and whose livelihoods will benefit and diversify through restoration activities inside and outside of farms. Given the scale of degraded forestland and the need to mitigate climate change and meet human development needs in the tropics, harnessing the potential of natural regeneration will play an essential role in achieving the ambitious goals that motivate global restoration initiatives.

*Biotropica’s* Special Issue is devoted to understanding how natural regeneration of tropical forests and trees can contribute to large-scale efforts to restore forests within landscapes and to increase tree cover on farms. Despite rapidly growing knowledge regarding the extent and feasibility of natural regeneration and the environmental and economic benefits of naturally regenerating forests in the tropics, tree planting remains the major focus of restoration programs (Chazdon 2014). **Natural regeneration is often ignored as a viable land-use option.** A deeper understanding of the societal and ecological challenges facing natural regeneration across the tropics can provide a basis for more cost-effective restoration planning and landscape management projects that aim to achieve a wide range of long-lasting social and environmental benefits. In addition, more costly establishment of tree plantations can be targeted within those areas where natural regeneration capacity is low and where economic benefits derived from timber and non-timber products from plantations meet the needs of local stakeholders.

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