Restoring Forests in the Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve

April 29, 2025

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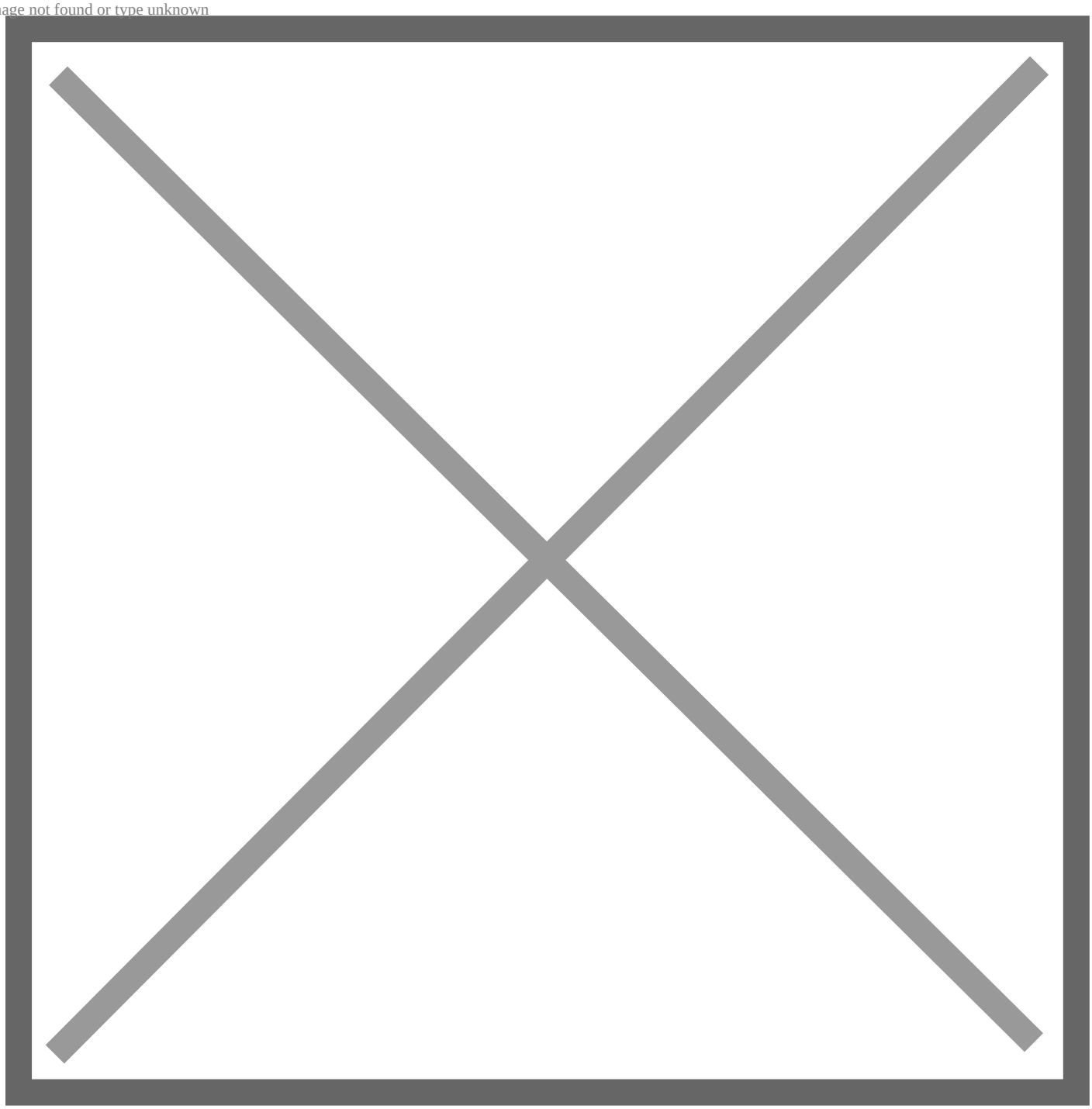
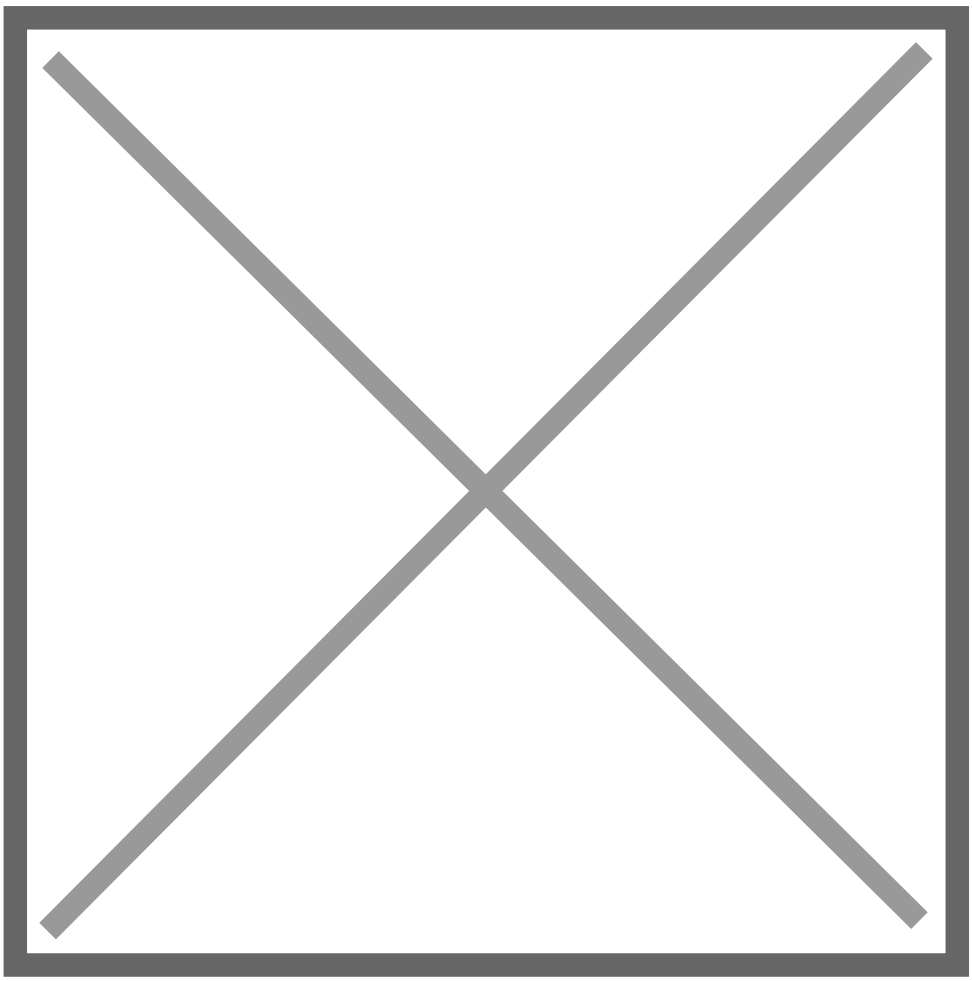
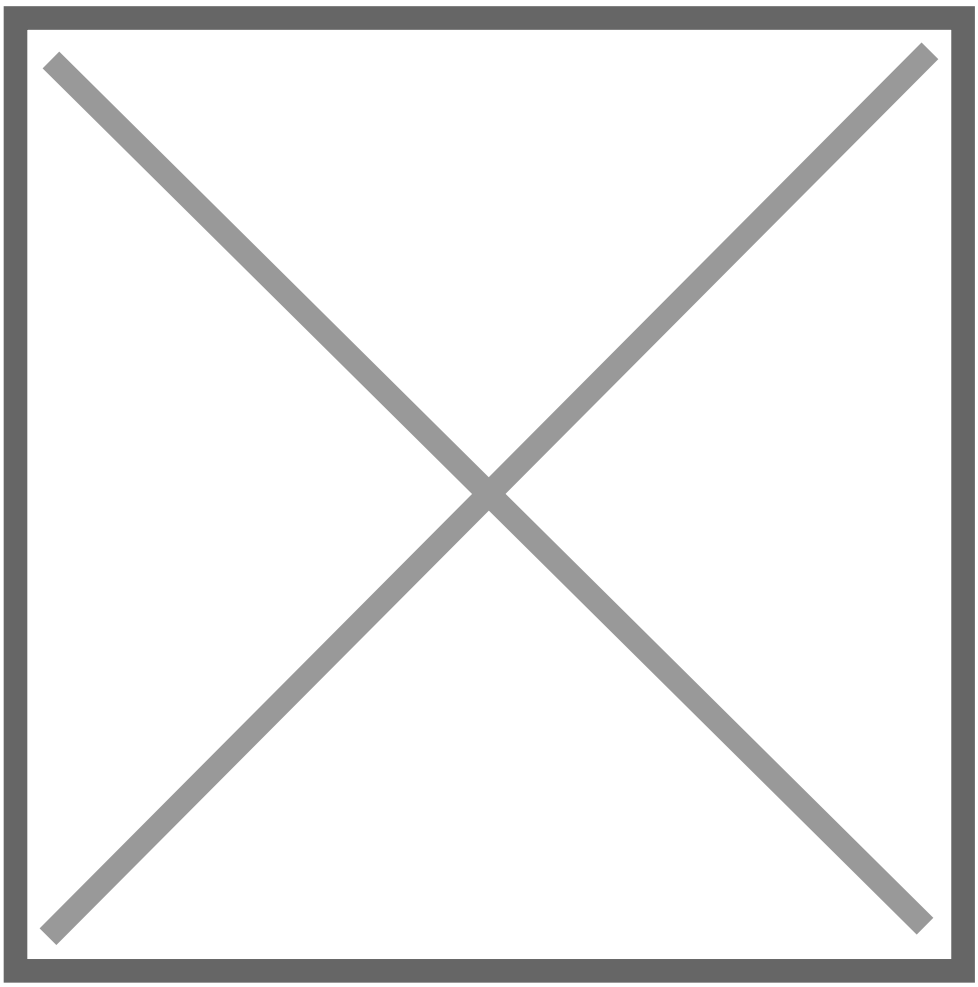
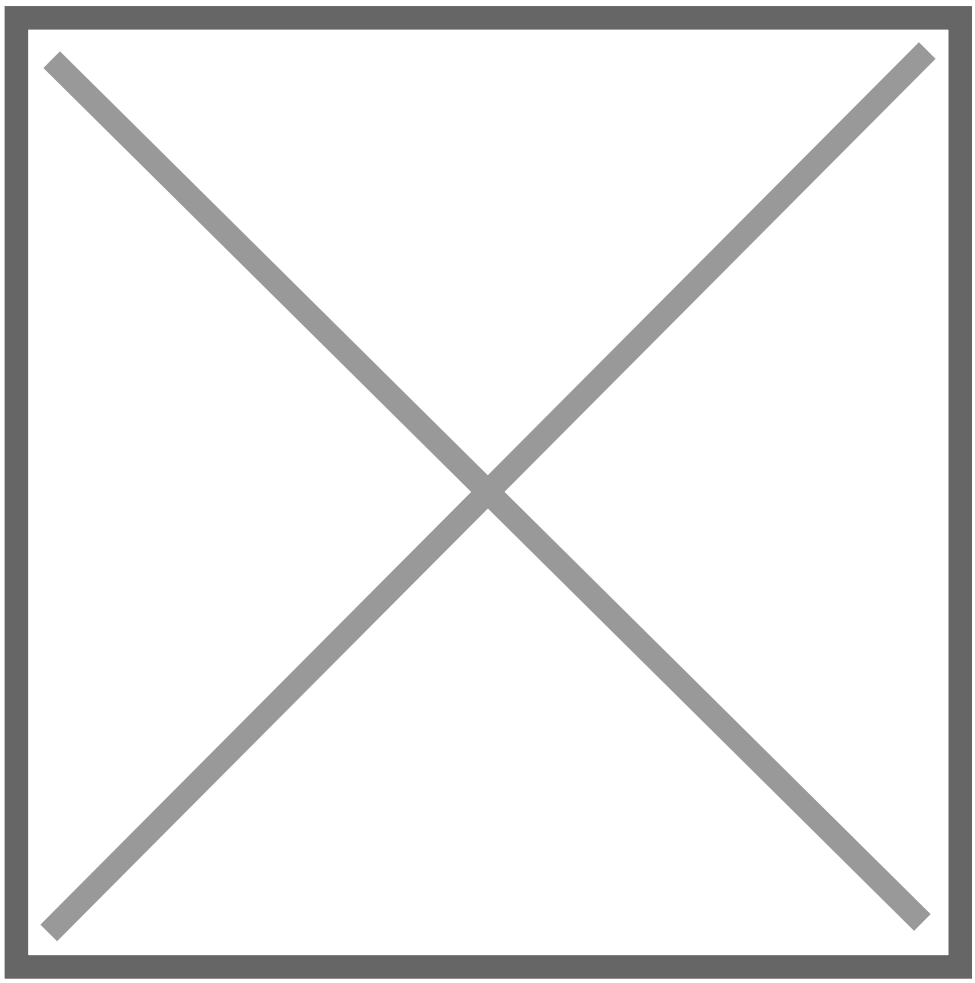
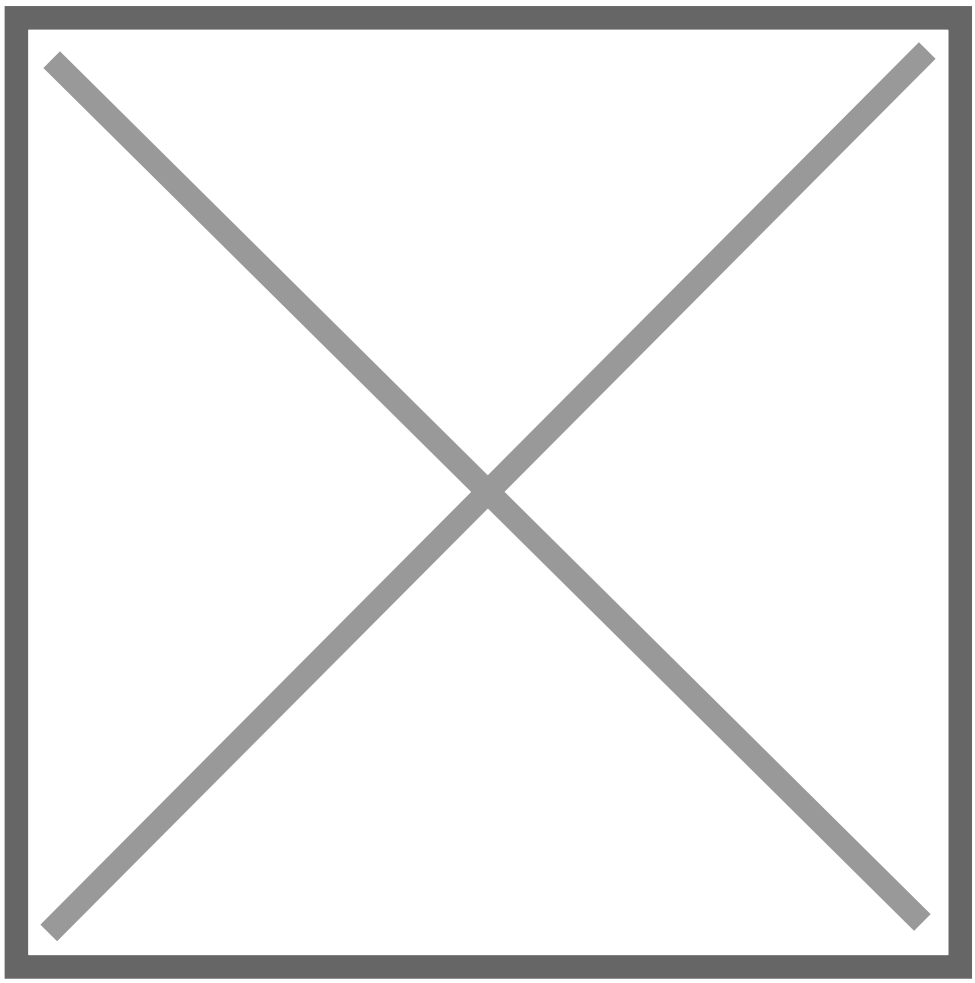
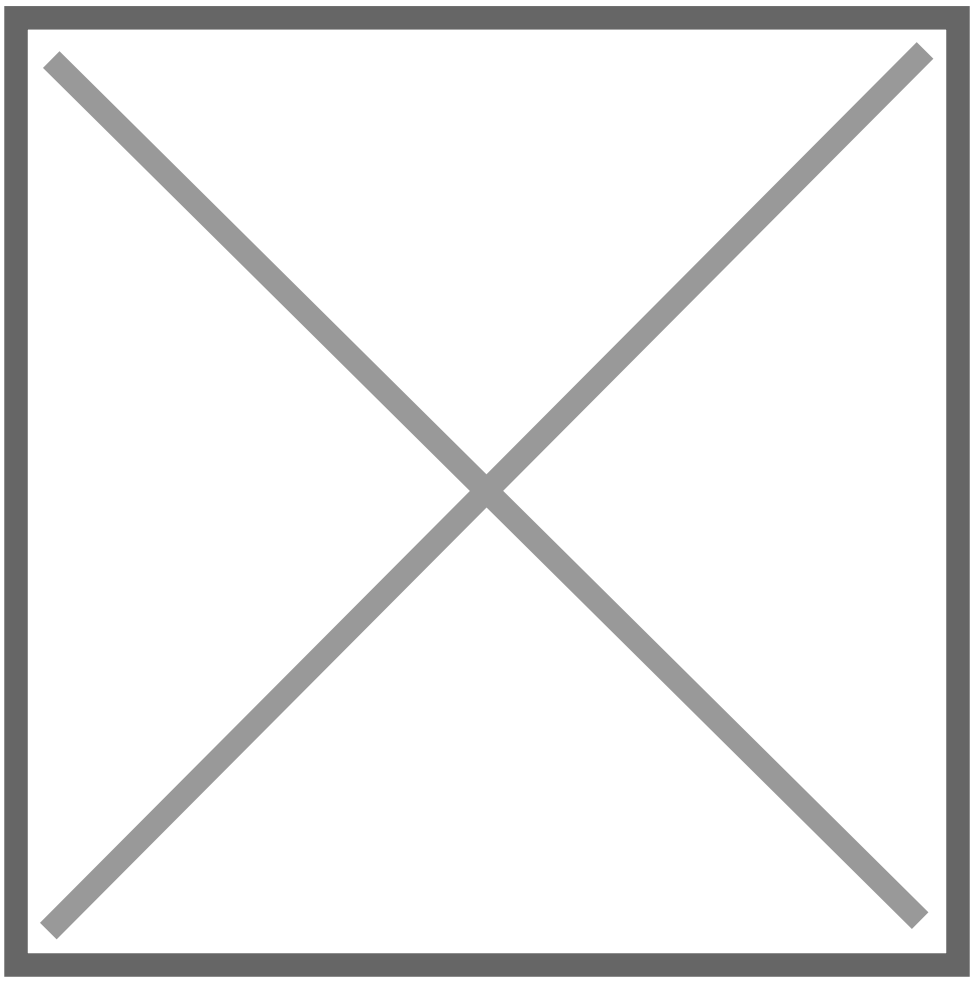


The monarch butterfly is known for its incredible annual migration of over 4,000 kilometers (about 2,500 miles) from eastern parts of the U.S. and Canada to central Mexico. Every year, from November to March, monarchs establish overwintering colonies in the oyamel and pine forests of Mexico in the Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve (MBBR), then return in early spring to their breeding sites in Texas and other U.S. states, where they start a new generation of monarchs.

Forest degradation in the Monarch Butterfly Region, which includes 16 municipalities in Michoacán and 11 municipalities in the State of Mexico, is due to illegal logging, land use change, poorly managed forest harvesting, and forest fires. To address these threats, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), with funding from Toyota Motor North America (TMNA) and support from Pollinator Partnership, established community-based tree nurseries to produce native trees to restore the priority forests where monarchs establish their overwintering colonies.

Between 2022 and 2024, WWF grew 160,000 native tree saplings in four community-based nurseries. The saplings were planted to reforest 521.4 acres of priority monarch overwintering forests in 16 agrarian properties – three in Michoacán and 13 in the State of Mexico.

WWF also provided economic incentives to 20 people to form two groups of volunteers in the indigenous community of Donaciano Ojeda, who are responsible for protecting 5,280.6 acres of priority monarch forests in the Monarch Butterfly Region.