

## NEW PLANT SPECIES FOUND IN EL QUIMBO

- *The finding was made during execution of the Pilot Plan developed by EMGESA within the framework of the largest Ecologic Restoration Program in the country.*
- *The plant was delivered to the Bogotá José Celestino Mutis Botanical Garden, in charge of protecting the the Colombian vegetation diversity germoplasm (seeds).*
- *Its name is Pitcairnia huilensis, in recognition to the Department of Huila where it was found.*
- *The finding was reported to the national and international scientific community after the analysis made by the Colombian National Herbarium.*

During execution of the Pilot Plan part of the EMGESA Ecologic Restoration Program in development of social-environmental activities carried out since 2014 at the El Quimbo Hydroelectric Station, a new plant species - unique in the world - called *Pitcairnia huilensis* was found in Vereda San José de Belén, municipality of El Agrado.

This Pilot Plan is the first phase of the Ecologic Restoration Program and is being developed in an area of 140 ha, performing ecologic studies and biotic characterizations of the territory as required to identify native plant species typical of this type of Forest and the best sowing options to guarantee the restoration's future success. This work is being done jointly with Fundación Natura and currently involves 60 workers from the area of influence and 30 experts from various scientific disciplines.

The Ecologic Restoration Program will be developed during 20 years in 11,079 ha. in the area of influence of the EL Quimbo reservoir, becoming the largest Tropical Dry Forest conservation project in the country. The area in which this program will be developed was selected with studies carried out by experts from Fundación Natura, who identified an integral area that will be tuned into an ecologic corridor in the department of Huila and will be a scenario generating connectivity among isolated forests.

All land properties involved in this Program have been acquired with an initial investment of COP 26,000 million to date, having built the first Practical Dry Forest

Investigation Center in Colombia and having made several scientific and technical investigations.

*"The discovery of this new plant species during work carried out by EMGESA is for us very satisfactory for it demonstrate that this is not only a restoration program but one that, in addition, is generating investigation and knowledge and resulting in new findings for the scientific community, helping protecting the country's biodiversity", said Lucio Rubio, Enel General Director in Colombia*

## **DETAILS OF THE FINDING**

A new plant species was found by scientists carrying out characterization work under the Pilot Plan. After the discovery, the plant was analyzed by the Colombian National Herbarium, to which the new species was reported, subsequently informing the national and international scientific community with an academic article published in the Caldasia magazine in mid 2015.

To guarantee its protection, EMGESA and botanist experts prepared a propagation protocol which as of now has allowed breeding more than 600 plants in the Company nursery.

This discovery, as well as the Restoration Program EMGESA will develop, are highly relevant for the tropical dry forest ecosystem, one of the most threatened in the world due to tree-felling activities carried out for agriculture and cattle purposes. According to the Alexander von Humboldt Biological Resource Investigation Institute, 65% of deforested lands in Colombia have been Tropical Dry Forests.

## **DELIVERY FOR ITS PROTECTION**

In order to guarantee investigation and protection of this new plant species, EMGESA and the Natura Foundation will deliver samples of the *Pitcairnia huilensis* to the José Celestino Mutis tropical garden, this being the entity in charge of protecting the country's vegetation biodiversity germplasm (seeds).