ECOHAVEN

RESTORATION PROJECT

La Motte à Thérèse · Bar le Duc

A propagation guide of endemic and indigenous plants of Mauritius

Focus: **Humid zone**

A field-practical guide to the endemic and indigenous plants of Mauritius's humid zone

FOR HOME GROWERS · PLANT AMATEURS · RESTORATION VOLUNTEERS

A project by

ER Agri

With the support of:

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Welcome

EcoHaven is a restoration initiative led by ER Agri in partnership with the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation, launched in 2024 under the Varuna programme with support from Expertise France and the Agence française de développement. Across two forested sites in Moka, La Motte à Thérèse and Bar le Duc, it surveys and propagates endemic and indigenous plants, controls invasive species, and works with the local community to restore ecological balance to the region.

The humid forests of Moka were once a green corridor running across the heart of Mauritius. Today, less than two percent of the island's original native forest remains. At La Motte à Thérèse and Bar le Duc, the EcoHaven project is working to bring this forest back.

This guide is for anyone willing to put a seed in soil. Whether you have a balcony, a backyard, or a community plot, the methods inside are practical, scientifically grounded, and proven in Mauritian conditions.

How to use this guide

The guide has two parts.

- **Part 1** (pp. 7-12) explains propagation methods in detail. Read these first- they apply across many species.
- **Part 2** (pp. 13-18) profiles every species, naming the recommended method and pointing back to Part 1.

Reading the icons

Propagation method + page reference	**Field note**
Tip for amateurs	**Warning / common mistake**
Ecological / restoration value	**Endemic to Mauritius**
Native to Mascarenes / region	

A note on knowledge gaps

For a few species, published technical data is sparse. Where this is the case, we say so honestly and recommend contacting MWF or EcoHaven before attempting wild collection.

The humid forests of Moka

Mauritius is small but its forests are not uniform. Climate, altitude, soil and exposure split the island into several distinct forest types - dry coastal, intermediate, upland wet, marsh, heath. The Moka range sits across an intermediate band that botanists call the humid zone.

Here, rainfall is moderate, the slopes are basaltic and fast-draining, and the forest historically held a rich mix of shrubs, mid-storey trees, and a canopy of ebonies, sapotes and figs. Ferns clung to trunks. Endemic geckos pollinated bell-shaped Trochetia flowers. Fruit bats and Pink Pigeons dispersed seed.

Most of this is gone. What remains, fragmented across mountains like Le Pouce, Deux Mamelles, Pieter Both and the slopes around La Motte à Thérèse, is the seed bank for everything EcoHaven is rebuilding.

Why endemic propagation matters

Mauritius lost 98% of its native forest in less than 400 years. The remaining 2% holds species found nowhere else on Earth; many down to fewer than 100 individuals in the wild.

Mauritian forests are not merely groups of trees scattered across the island - they are the very foundation upon which Mauritius was built. Long before modern development, the endemic forests of Mauritius shaped the island's climate, regulated its rainfall, protected its soils, and created the environmental conditions that allowed life to flourish. The Mauritian flora evolved over thousands of years in harmony with the island's unique climate, and in return, these forests helped maintain that delicate balance: cooler temperatures, regular rainfall, stable humidity, and protection against extreme weather conditions.

Today, as our forests continue to disappear, Mauritius is beginning to feel the consequences. Rising temperatures, scarcer rainfall, prolonged droughts, and increasing climate instability are not isolated events - they are warning signs of an ecosystem under stress. A healthy forest naturally creates conditions favourable for its own survival. When vast areas of endemic vegetation are destroyed and replaced by invasive species or urbanisation, the island gradually loses the natural systems that once regulated its climate. Protecting Mauritian forests is therefore not simply about conserving nature; it is about protecting the future climate stability of Mauritius itself.

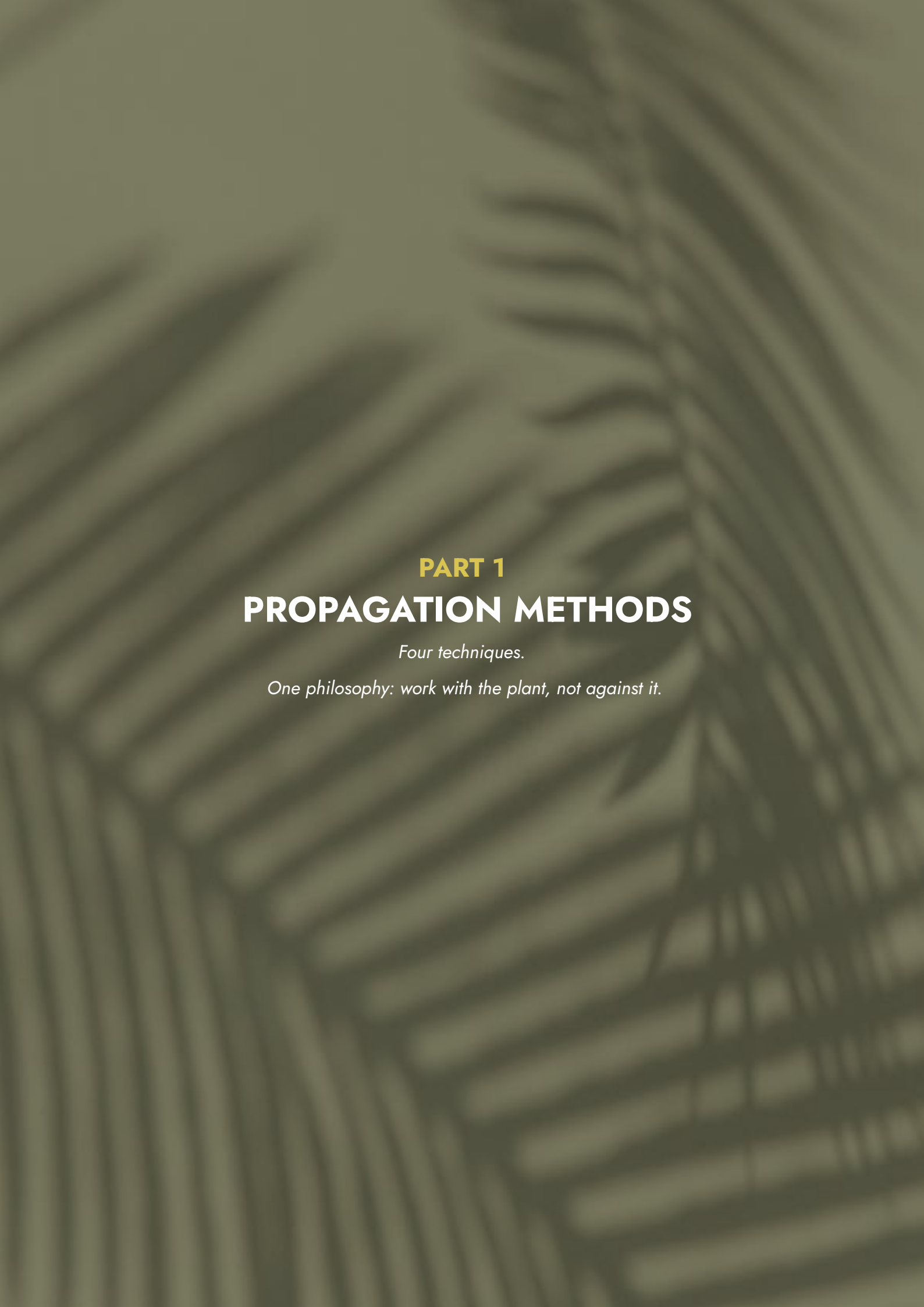
Mauritian forests are also the last refuge of some of the rarest species on Earth. The Mauritius fruit bat, the echo parakeet, the pink pigeon, and the island's remaining endemic birds all depend on native forests for food, shelter, nesting sites, and survival. If fruit bats are increasingly seen feeding in gardens and residential areas, it is because the forests can no longer provide enough natural food resources. The disappearance of endemic plants means the disappearance of the habitats that sustain our wildlife. To save Mauritius' endemic fauna, we must first restore and protect the forests they call home.

Beyond their ecological importance, Mauritian endemic plants also represent a priceless cultural, scientific, and economic heritage. Many native species were traditionally known for their medicinal properties and used in local remedies for generations. Others produced exceptionally durable hardwoods once prized for construction and craftsmanship. Unfortunately, the rarity of these species today makes such uses nearly impossible. Yet their potential remains immense - from medicine and research to sustainable forestry and ecological tourism.

Protecting Mauritian forests is therefore far more than an environmental responsibility. It is an investment in climate resilience, biodiversity conservation, water security, cultural heritage, and the future well-being of Mauritius. Restoring these forests means restoring the natural systems that have protected and sustained the island for centuries

What one grower can do

- Plant endemic and indigenous Mauritian trees whenever possible
- Protect existing native vegetation and avoid unnecessary tree cutting
- Avoid planting invasive exotic species
- Support and promote local endemic plant nurseries
- Participate in community reforestation activities
- Educate family, neighbours, and children about the importance of Mauritian forest



PART 1
PROPAGATION METHODS

Four techniques.

One philosophy: work with the plant, not against it.

Method 1
Growing from seed

> *Seed is nature's preferred way of moving a forest forward.*
> *Every seed carries genetic diversity - the raw material of a resilient ecosystem.*

1. When to collect

Collect when fruits are fully ripe but not yet rotting on the ground. Ripe fruits usually change colour (green to red, yellow, orange, purple, or black) and often soften slightly. Birds and bats are your competition - check trees every few days during fruiting season.

2. Cleaning the seed

Pulp left on the seed encourages fungus and inhibits germination. Method depends on fruit type:

- Soft fruits (Ficus, Ludia, Olea): squash gently in water, separate flesh, dry 24h in shade.
- Hard fruits (Mimusops, Diospyros, Sideroxylon, Labourdonnaisia): soak 48h to soften pulp, then scrub clean.
- Dry capsules (Trochetia, Barleria, Psiadia): collect when capsules begin to split. Open over a tray.

3. Storage - only if you must

Most Mauritian endemic seeds are recalcitrant - they lose viability quickly and cannot be dried or frozen. Sow as soon as possible after cleaning. If storage is unavoidable, keep cool and shaded for no more than two to three weeks.

4. Sowing

- Substrate: 1 part sieved forest topsoil + 1 part coarse river sand + 1 part well-rotted compost.
- Depth: roughly twice the seed's own diameter. Tiny seeds are surface-sown and lightly dusted with sand.
- Containers: seed trays for small seeds; deep root-trainer tubes for large seeds to avoid transplant shock.

5. Germination conditions

- Light: bright, indirect. Never direct midday sun.
- Temperature: ambient Mauritian conditions (20-28 °C) suit almost all species.
- Moisture: consistently damp, never waterlogged. Fine misting twice daily beats one heavy watering.
- Patience: germination ranges from 2 weeks (Psiadia, Trochetia) to 6+ months (Diospyros, Mimusops).

Do not give up early

Never throw away seed trays that haven't germinated after a month. Many endemic seeds break dormancy slowly. Label, keep moist, and wait - sometimes six months or more.

6. First transplant

Move seedlings into individual pots when they have two pairs of true leaves. Handle by the leaves, never the stem. Keep under shade for 4-6 weeks before any sun exposure.

Method 2
Growing from cuttings

> *Cuttings produce genetically identical plants - useful when seed is scarce but always supplement with seed-grown plants to keep diversity alive.*

Choosing cutting material

- Take cuttings from healthy, disease-free mother plants.
- Semi-hardwood is usually best: firm at the base, still slightly green at the tip.
- Avoid soft new growth (rots) and old hard wood (slow to root).
- Length: 10-20 cm depending on species. Cut just below a node.
- Remove all but the top two or three leaves to reduce water loss.

Preparation

- Trim the base cleanly with a sharp, clean blade at a 45° angle.
- Dip the base in rooting hormone (IBA-based, available in horticultural shops). Tap off excess.
- For species with milky latex (Mimusops, Ficus), let cuttings sit 10 minutes for the latex to dry before planting.

Substrate and conditions

- Use a 1:1 mix of perlite and coco-peat, or coarse river sand and well-rotted compost. The substrate should drain freely but hold moisture.
- Insert cuttings 3-5 cm deep, firm around the base.
- Keep in deep shade with high humidity - many growers cover trays with clear plastic for the first 2-3 weeks. Vent daily to prevent fungal issues.
- Rooting typically takes 4-10 weeks. Tug-test gently after a month; resistance means roots.

Field tip

Take more cuttings than you need. Even with experience, success rates of 50-70% are normal for endemic species. With rare species, the failures still teach you what works.

Method 3
Wildling rescue & seedling transplant

> *A wildling is a young plant that has germinated naturally - often by the hundreds - under its mother tree.*
>
> *Most will not survive the wild. Rescue is a powerful, low-cost method.*

For species with low seed availability or slow nursery germination, such as Coffea, Erythroxylum, Diospyros, Labourdonnaisia, Sideroxylon, Eugenia, wildlings are often the most practical route.

When and how to collect

- Best timing: wet season, when soil is soft and seedlings are actively growing.
- Select healthy young plants under 30 cm, with at least four true leaves.
- Dig with a small trowel, taking a generous root ball with intact mother soil.
- Wrap the root ball immediately in damp newspaper or place in a polythene bag. Plant within a few hours - same day is ideal.

Potting up

- Pot deep - many endemics have long taproots that hate being bent or pruned.
- Use the standard endemic mix (1 forest topsoil: 1 sand: 1 compost).
- Water in well, then move immediately to deep shade for 2-4 weeks.
- Many wildlings will wilt initially. Do not over-water. Patience is the cure.

Recovery period

Most wildlings recover within 3-6 weeks. Some lose all leaves and re-flush from buds - this is normal.
Keep in shade and high humidity and resist the urge to fertilise during recovery.

Tips

- Rescue during cooler parts of the day.
- Choose healthy plants with good root systems.
- Be patient—transplant shock is normal.

Remember

Every wilding you rescue is a chance to grow **something beautiful**!

Wilding Rescue

How to rescue a wild plant

Give wild plants a second chance



Why rescue wildings?

- Saves desirable volunteer plants
- Preserves genetic diversity
- Eco-friendly and rewarding



1. Identify

Look for healthy volunteer plants in undesired spots.



2. Loosen Soil

Gently loosen the soil around the plant to avoid damaging roots.



3. Lift Carefully

Lift the plant out, keeping as many roots intact as possible.



4. Pot Up

Place in a pot with well-draining mix and water thoroughly.



5. Care & Observe

Keep in a shaded area, water regularly, and watch it thrive!

Permits and ethics

Always check before collecting

Wild collection from protected areas (national parks, nature reserves, MWF sites) requires permits. For private land, get the landowner's permission. For rare or endangered species, coordinate with MWF or the National Parks and Conservation Service first.

Method 4
Propagating ferns

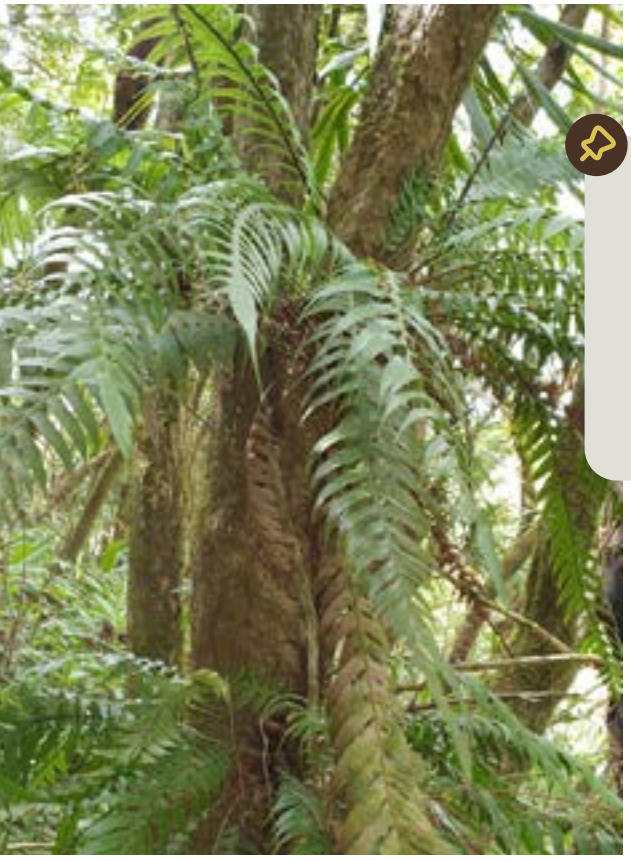
Ferns reproduce from spores, not seeds.
The principle is the same - but the scale is dust, not gravel.

Ferns occupy a special role in the Mauritian forest: epiphytes draped on trunks, ground covers along streams, large fronds in damp gullies. Propagation falls into two routes - division of mature plants (practical for amateurs) and spore sowing (specialist work, usually for nurseries).

Division - the practical method

Most Mauritian ferns with creeping or short-creeping rhizomes can be divided: Microsorum, Phymatosorus, Blechnum, Asplenium (mature clumps only), Vittaria.

1. Lift the parent plant carefully, exposing the rhizome.
2. Use a clean, sharp knife to separate sections - each must include at least one frond and a healthy growing tip.
3. Plant divisions in a moist, leaf-mould-rich substrate. Do not bury the rhizome - it should sit on or just below the surface.
4. Keep in deep shade with high humidity for 4-6 weeks. Mist daily.



Epiphytes are different

- Vittaria, Asplenium nidus, and Phymatosorus often live on tree trunks.
- Mount divisions on a piece of bark, tree-fern fibre, or sphagnum-wrapped wood rather than potting them. Tie with biodegradable twine until roots establish.

Spore propagation - for specialists

Spores appear as fine brown or black dust on the underside of mature fronds. Spore sowing requires sterile substrate, controlled humidity, and patience (months from spore to first frond). For most amateurs, this method is best left to specialist nurseries like MWF Solitude or the EcoHaven nursery.

Nursery basics

A good endemic nursery is not complicated. It needs shade, water, drainage, and protection from rats, snails, and curious dogs. The same principles apply to a balcony, a backyard table, or a community plot.

Light & substrate

Most seedlings need 50-70% shade for the first six months. The universal endemic mix suits 90% of species: 1 part sieved forest topsoil, 1 part coarse river sand, 1 part well-rotted compost (1:1:1). For ferns, raise leaf mould to 50%; for dry-zone species, raise sand to 50%.

Water

- Once or twice daily depending on temperature and humidity; morning is best.
- Fine rose or mister. Rainwater ideal; tap water fine if left to stand overnight.

Pests & problems

- Damping-off (sudden seedling collapse): reduce watering, improve ventilation.
- Snails: hand-pick at dusk or set crushed eggshell barriers.
- Scale and mealybugs: wipe with diluted neem oil.

Keep records

Note when you sowed, where the parent came from, what germinated, what failed. Your records help fill knowledge gaps that no one else has documented yet.

From nursery to forest

The day a plant leaves the nursery is the most dangerous day of its life. Prepare it carefully.

When is a plant ready?

Firm woody stem at the base; several pairs of mature leaves; roots reaching the bottom of the pot but not circling tightly. Typically, 6-18 months in the nursery.

Hardening off (2-4 weeks before transplant)

- Week 1: move from deep shade to light shade.
- Weeks 2-3: gradually increase morning sun (1 —> 4 hours), reduce watering frequency.
- Week 4: ready for the field.

Planting out

Choose a site matching the species' natural habitat. Dig a hole twice the width and the same depth as the pot - loosening surrounding soil matters more than fertiliser. Plant at the same depth as in the pot (burying the stem causes rot). Water in well, then mulch around the base, keeping mulch 5 cm clear of the stem.

Visit the planting site monthly for the first year. Weed competing exotics by hand. Water during prolonged dry spells. Replant losses in the second year.

Restoration is a relay

You may not see the forest you helped plant reach maturity. That's fine. You are passing the baton to the trees themselves, and to the people who will tend them after you.

PART 2

SPECIES DATABASE

Thirty-three endemic and indigenous plants.

Each entry points to a method page in Part 1.

Acalypha ***integrifolia*** · Euphorbiaceae

Bois queue de rat · Bois de crève-cœur

Status: Endemic to the Mascarenes · IUCN LC **Habitat:** Intermediate and upland forest

Propagation: Cuttings > see page 8

Notes**:** Semi-hardwood cuttings 15-20 cm, taken in spring. Strip lower leaves, dip in rooting hormone, insert in perlite + coco-peat mix.

Tip: *Reddish stems and serrated red leaf margins help confirm the species at collection time.*

Role: Understorey shrub valuable for reintroducing structural diversity in degraded intermediate forest.

Aphloia ***theiformis*** · Aphloiaceae

Fandamane · Change écorce

Status: Native (Mascarenes, Madagascar, East Africa) · IUCN LC **Habitat:** Intermediate and upland forest

Propagation: Seeds > see page 7

Notes: Collect ripe white berries. Clean pulp away in water. Sow fresh in standard endemic mix; germination typically 4-8 weeks.

Tip: *A reliable, hardy native - excellent first species for new amateur growers building confidence.*

Role: A widespread native that knits restoration plots together; tolerant of partial sun and well-suited to edge planting.

Asplenium ***nidus*** · Aspleniaceae

Bird's nest fern · Langue de bœuf · Fougère nid d'oiseau

Status: Native (Old World tropics, present in Mauritius) · IUCN LC **Habitat:** Epiphytic on trees in humid forests

Propagation: Spores (specialist) / division > see page 10

Notes: Spore propagation is delicate and best left to nurseries. Mature clumps can occasionally be divided. Keep in shade with porous, humus-rich substrate.

Tip: *Excess water at the root crown causes rot - the most common failure with this species.*

Role: Adds vertical, epiphytic structure to restored forest, supporting invertebrates and water capture.

Baleria ***observatrix*** · Acanthaceae

Barleria

Status: Endemic to Mauritius · IUCN Critically Endangered **Habitat:** Known historically from Corps de Garde

Propagation**: Seeds > see page 7**

Notes: Collect from dry capsules when they begin to split. Sow shallowly; germination 3-6 weeks under shade.

Tip: *Genetic diversity is critical - never propagate from a single parent plant if alternatives exist.*

Role: Among Mauritius's rarest shrubs. Every successfully propagated individual is a meaningful conservation gain.

Blechnum ***attenuatum*** · Blechnaceae

Large deer fern

Status: Native (tropical Africa, Indian Ocean) · IUCN LC **Habitat:** Moist forested environments, stream banks, shaded uplands

Propagation: Rhizome division > see page 10

Notes: Divide the creeping rhizome into 5-10 cm segments, each with at least one growing tip. Plant in moist, leaf-mould-rich substrate, in shade.

Tip: *Never let new divisions dry out - keep humidity high for the first month.*

Role: Ground-level fern layer; stabilises soil along restored riparian and gully systems.

Coffee ***myrtifolia*** · Rubiaceae

Café marron à petites feuilles

Status: Endemic to Mauritius · IUCN Endangered **Habitat:** Dry and semi-dry forest

Propagation: Seedlings > see page 9

Notes: Wildling rescue is the most practical route. Collect young seedlings beneath mother trees during the wet season; bag with original soil.

Tip: *Coffee endemics have deep taproots - transplant young and pot deep.*

Role: Star-shaped fragrant flowers feed endemic pollinators; a flagship shrub for dry-zone restoration.

Diospyros ***tessellaria*** · Ebenaceae

Bois d'ébène · Mauritian ebony

Status: Endemic to Mauritius · IUCN Vulnerable **Habitat:** Intermediate to upland forest

Propagation: Seedlings (occasionally seeds) > see page 9/7

Notes: Large recalcitrant seeds - sow immediately after fruit fall. Germination is slow (3-6 months). Wildlings may be rescued from established stands.

Tip: *Plant ebony with a long horizon in mind. It grows slowly but is one of the most iconic species you can give back to the island.*

Role: Keystone canopy tree of Mauritian dry and intermediate forest; historic restoration priority.

Dombeya ***acutangula*** · Malvaceae

Mahot · Bois de senteur bleu

Status: Native to Mascarenes (verify subspecies) · IUCN status varies by subspecies **Habitat:** Intermediate forest, often disturbed margins

Propagation: Cuttings > see page 8

Notes: Semi-hardwood cuttings root readily with hormone. Soft palmate leaves; flowers in pink to white clusters.

Tip: *Verify subspecies before planting - D. acutangula has several Mascarene forms, only some native to Mauritius.*

Role: Fast-growing pioneer; useful for early canopy cover on cleared restoration sites.

Dracaena ***reflexa*** · Asparagaceae

Bois de chandelle · Chandelle

Status: Native (Mascarenes, Madagascar) · IUCN LC **Habitat:** Intermediate and upland forest

Propagation: Cuttings > see page 8

Notes: Stem cuttings root reliably - even thick stem sections will sprout. Use a sandy, free-draining substrate.

Tip: *One of the easiest natives to propagate. Excellent starting point for new growers.*

Role: Multi-stemmed understorey shrub; bright fruits feed birds and provide structural diversity.

Erythroxylum ***macrocarpum*** · Erythroxylaceae

Bois de ronde

Status: Endemic to Mauritius · IUCN Vulnerable **Habitat:** Sub-humid and upland wet forest

Propagation: Seedlings > see page 9

Notes: Wildling rescue under mother trees during wet months. Pot deep; protect from direct sun for the first 6 months.

Tip: *The thick leathery leaves with pale undersides confirm the species - don't confuse with E. sideroxyloides.*

Role: Mid-storey tree with mosaic bark; bright red upright fruits attract endemic birds.

Erythroxylum ***sideroxyloides*** · Erythroxylaceae

Bois de ronde

Status: Endemic to the Mascarenes · IUCN LC **Habitat:** Dry and semi-dry forest

Propagation : Cuttings > see page 9

Notes: Juvenile leaves are heterophyllous - long, narrow with a central dark stripe. Adult cuttings root with hormone.

Tip: *Juvenile and adult leaves differ dramatically - don't dismiss young plants as a different species.*

Role: Drought-tolerant; valuable for dry-zone restoration and forest-edge work.

Eugenia pollicina · Myrtaceae

Bois clou

Status: Endemic to Mauritius · status to confirm **Habitat:** Intermediate forest

Propagation: Seedlings (specialist) > see page 9

Notes: Propagation data sparse - contact MWF or EcoHaven nursery before attempting. Likely recalcitrant seeds requiring fresh sowing.

Tip: *Treat this species with caution; document every step if you successfully propagate.*

Role: Rare myrtle of high conservation value; propagation contributes to species recovery records.

Eugenia sieberi · Myrtaceae

Bois clou

Status: Endemic to Mauritius **Habitat:** Intermediate forest

Propagation: Seedlings > see page 9

Notes: Recalcitrant fleshy-fruited seed. Collect ripe fruit, clean pulp, sow fresh in well-drained mix.

Tip: *Like most Myrtaceae endemics, seeds will not tolerate drying - sow within days of collection.*

Role: Adds diversity to the mid-canopy; flowers and fruit support endemic fauna.

Ficus mauritiana · Moraceae

Figuier

Status: Endemic to the Mascarenes · IUCN LC **Habitat:** Intermediate and upland forest, especially riverine

Propagation: Seeds > see page 7

Notes: Hardwood cuttings root well; air-layering also reliable for difficult specimens. Latex present - let cuttings dry briefly before planting.

Tip: *Fig species are generous propagators. Even simple cuttings often take with minimal intervention.*

Role: Large fruiting tree; figs feed Mauritius fruit bats and many bird species - keystone for restoration.

Gaertnera psychotrioides · Rubiaceae

Bois banane · Bois café · Bois rivière

Status: Endemic to Mauritius **Habitat:** Forests between 420-700 m altitude

Propagation: Seedlings > see page 9

Notes: Ellipsoid fleshy fruits - clean and sow fresh. Wildling rescue also viable beneath mature trees.

Tip: *The fragrant white waxy flowers are unmistakable - confirm identification at flowering time.*

Role: Shrub-layer addition for moist intermediate restoration; fragrant flowers support pollinators.

Labourdonnaisia glauca · Sapotaceae

Bois de natte à grandes feuilles · Natte rouge

Status: Endemic to Mauritius **Habitat:** Primary forest

Propagation: Seedlings > see page 9

Notes: Large recalcitrant drupes; sow fresh. Germination slow (2-6 months). Wildlings under mother trees are reliable.

Tip: *Mature trees reach 20 m+ - this is a long-term canopy contribution. Plant where there is space and shelter.*

Role: Major canopy tree of upland forest; historic ecological keystone.

Labourdonnaisia revoluta · Sapotaceae

Petit natte

Status: Endemic to Mauritius · propagation data sparse **Habitat:** Upland forest (limited information)

Propagation: Seedlings (specialist) > see page 9

Notes: Limited published propagation guidance. Treat as for L. glauca - fresh seed, very slow germination, deep pots.

Tip: *If you attempt this species, document carefully and share findings with MWF or the Mauritius Herbarium.*

Role: Rare endemic sapote; every successfully grown individual is a conservation contribution.

Ludia mauritiana · Salicaceae

Bois Mozambique

Status: Endemic to Mauritius **Habitat:** Intermediate forest

Propagation: Seedlings > see page 9

Notes: Small red berries; collect, clean, sow fresh in shaded mix. Germination 4-8 weeks typical.

Tip: *The netted venation on the leaf underside and white-spotted branches confirm identification.*

Role: Understorey shrub with small bird-attracting berries; useful gap-filler in restoration.

Microsorum punctatum · Polypodiaceae

Wart fern

Status: Native (Mascarenes and pantropical) · IUCN LC **Habitat:** Terrestrial or epiphytic in humid forest

Propagation: Rhizome division > see page 10

Notes: Short-creeping rhizome divides cleanly. Each section needs at least one frond and a healthy growing tip.

Tip: *Plant divisions on top of moist substrate, anchoring loosely - the rhizome must not be buried.*

Role: Ground-cover fern adding low structural diversity; tolerates a range of light conditions.

Mimusops maxima · Sapotaceae

Makak

Status: Endemic to the Mascarenes · IUCN Vulnerable **Habitat:** Sub-humid forest, upland wet forest, heath

Propagation: Cuttings (seedlings also) > see page 8/9

Notes: Hardwood cuttings can root with hormone treatment. Seed propagation possible but slow - seeds are recalcitrant and large.

Tip: *Milky latex from cuttings - allow to dry briefly before planting to prevent rot.*

Role: Canopy tree with edible olive-like fruits; historical food source for endemic fauna.

Olea lancea · Oleaceae

Bois d'olive

Status: Native to Mascarenes and Madagascar · IUCN LC **Habitat:** Dry to intermediate forest

Propagation: Seedlings > see page 9

Notes: Small purple-black drupes; clean and sow fresh. Germination variable, sometimes slow (2-4 months).

Tip: *Fine-grained hardwood, traditionally valued - but a slow grower. Patience is essential.*

Role: Forms dense thickets in dry forest restoration; durable wood and habitat structure.

Pandanus wiehei · Pandanaceae

Vacoas

Status: Endemic to Mauritius · IUCN Critically Endangered **Habitat:** Upland marsh and heath

Propagation: Seedlings > see page 9

Notes: Segmented fruit; separate segments, sow fresh in moist substrate. Patience required - germination can take 3 months.

Tip: *One of Mauritius's rarest pandans - every plant counts. Coordinate with MWF before collecting wild material.*

Role: Iconic upland species; restoration of marsh and heath habitats depends on this and related Pandanus species.

Phymatosorus scolopendria · Polypodiaceae

Polypode

Status: Native (widespread Indian Ocean tropics) **Habitat:** Climbing or epiphytic in humid forest

Propagation: Rhizome division > see page 10

Notes: Long creeping rhizomes divide easily. Each segment with a frond and growing tip will establish.

Tip: *Allow some shade and consistent moisture for the first 4-6 weeks after division.*

Role: Versatile fern that drapes trunks and rocks; restores epiphytic communities.

Polyscias mauritiana · Araliaceae

Bois petit feuille

Status: Endemic to Mauritius · propagation data sparse **Habitat:** Limited published information

Propagation: Cuttings (specialist) > see page 8

Notes: Published propagation guidance is limited. Polyscias species generally respond well to hardwood cuttings - attempt with hormone treatment failed.

Tip: *Contact EcoHaven nursery or MWF before attempting wild collection of this rare endemic.*

Role: Rare endemic shrub; propagation success contributes to genus recovery efforts.

Psiadia cataractae · Asteraceae

Baume de l'île plate

Status: Endemic to Mauritius · IUCN Critically Endangered **Habitat:** Subtropical or tropical dry forest

Propagation: Cuttings > see page 8

Notes: Semi-hardwood cuttings root reasonably well. Aromatic foliage when crushed - useful for field identification.

Tip: *As a CR species, prioritise genetic diversity - collect material from multiple parent plants where available.*

Role: Critically endangered endemic shrub; every individual propagated is a measurable conservation outcome.

Psiadia penninervia · Asteraceae

Bois de ronde

Status: Endemic to the Mascarenes · IUCN Endangered **Habitat:** Intermediate and upland forest

Propagation: Cuttings > see page 8

Notes: Semi-hardwood cuttings root well. Three prominent longitudinal leaf veins confirm identification.

Tip: *Yellow flower heads attract pollinators - useful for restoring pollinator networks in disturbed forest.*

Role: Versatile shrub for intermediate forest restoration; bushy growth quickly fills gaps.

Sideroxylon cinereum · Sapotaceae

Manglier vert

Status: Endemic to Mauritius **Habitat:** Intermediate forest

Propagation: Seedlings > see page 9

Notes: Fleshy-fruited; clean pulp, sow fresh. Slow germination typical of Sapotaceae endemics.

Tip: *Like other native Sapotaceae, the seedlings hate root disturbance - pot deep from the start.*

Role: Mid-storey tree adding canopy structure; valuable for restoring intermediate forest composition.

Syzygium contractum · Myrtaceae

Bois clou

Status: Endemic to Mauritius · propagation data sparse **Habitat:** Limited published information

Propagation: Seeds germinate in standard media with ambium temperature, easy germinating seeds within two weeks, the seeds must be collected fresh from May-June > see page 7

Notes: Published propagation data limited. Treat as standard Myrtaceae: recalcitrant fleshy seed, sow fresh, do not dry.

Tip: *Coordinate with MWF or EcoHaven before wild collection - this species needs careful population management.*

Role: Rare endemic; propagation contributes directly to species' survival prospects.

Trochetia blackburniana *(Ruizia blackburniana)* · Malvaceae

Boucle d'oreille

Status: Endemic to Mauritius · IUCN Endangered **Habitat:** Intermediate forest, upland wet forest, heath

Propagation: Seeds (cuttings possible) > see page 7/8

Notes: Collect woody capsules just as they begin to split. Sow fresh; germination 3-6 weeks. Hooked brown leaf stalks confirm identification.

Tip: *Pink-red bell-shaped flowers attract endemic geckos - a strong species for restoring pollinator networks.*

Role: Most common Trochetia species; valuable for upland forest restoration and pollinator support.

Trochetia boutoniana *(Ruizia boutoniana)* · Malvaceae

Boucle d'oreille · National flower of Mauritius

Status: Endemic to Mauritius (Le Morne Brabant) · Conservation priority **Habitat:** Mountain slopes of Le Morne Brabant

Propagation: Seeds > see page 7

Notes: Capsules contain ~10 black seeds. Sow fresh - germination is variable but reliable. All trochetia sp. Germinate very well. This is the most reliable method. Cutting: Tip cutting was tried on T.unifolra the specimen successfully rooted in two months.

Tip: *The national flower of Mauritius since 1992. First successful cultivation was achieved by botanist Joseph Guého in 1973.*

Role: Symbol of Mauritian botanical heritage; flowers feed endemic white-eyes and geckos. A flagship for any restoration project.

Trochetia uniflora *(Ruizia uniflora)* · Malvaceae

Boucle d'oreille blanche

Status: Endemic to Mauritius · IUCN Vulnerable **Habitat:** Upland humid forests - Trois Mamelles, Le Pouce, Calebasse

Propagation: Seeds > see page 7

Notes: Woody capsules split to release winged seeds. Sow within 2 weeks; cover lightly with sand. Germination 3-6 weeks under shade.

Tip: *Trochetia seedlings dislike root disturbance - sow directly into deep tubes rather than transplanting from trays.*

Role: Pollinated by endemic geckos and white-eyes; flowers May-June. Keystone for upland restoration.

Vittaria flexuosa · Pteridaceae

Ribbon fern

Status: Native (pantropical, present in Mauritius) **Habitat:** Epiphytic on tree trunks and branches in humid forest

Propagation: Division of mature clumps > see page 10

Notes: Strap-shaped pendulous fronds form dense clumps. Divide mature plants carefully; spore propagation is specialist.

Tip: *Mount on a piece of bark or tree fern fibre rather than potting - this is an epiphyte.*

Role: Restores the epiphytic fern layer of humid forest; an indicator of healthy microclimate.

Warneckea trinervis · Melastomataceae

Bois canne

Status: Endemic to Mauritius · IUCN Vulnerable **Habitat:** Intermediate and upland forest

Propagation: Seedlings > see page 9

Notes: Small fleshy fruits; clean and sow fresh. Wildling rescue effective under mature trees.

Tip: *Three prominent leaf veins and very short leaf stalks confirm identification.*

Role: Highly branched understorey tree; long stamens of white flowers feed pollinators.

Troubleshooting

Most propagation failures fall into a handful of patterns. Here's what to look for, and what to do.

What you see	Likely cause	What to do
Seedlings collapse suddenly at soil line	Damping-off (fungal). Too much moisture, poor air flow.	Reduce watering. Improve ventilation. Sterilise substrate next time.
Seeds never germinate after 2 months	Either dormancy (still viable) or seed was dried/old.	Keep moist and wait 6+ months for slow species. Always sow recalcitrant seed fresh.
Cuttings rot at the base	Substrate too wet or cutting too soft.	Use better-drained mix. Take semi-hardwood, not soft tip. Let latex-bearing cuttings dry briefly before planting.
Wildlings wilt for weeks	Root shock from transplant. Normal in first 3-6 weeks.	Deep shade, high humidity, minimal water. Do not fertilise. Patience.
Leaves yellowing in nursery	Nutrient deficiency, or too much sun.	Move to deeper shade. After 4 weeks add diluted seaweed feed.
Fern fronds turning brown	Either too dry, too wet, or scale insects.	Check substrate moisture. Inspect undersides for scale; wipe with neem solution.
Plants die after planting out	Insufficient hardening off or planted in wrong habitat.	Harden gradually over 4 weeks. Match species to site conditions (light, drainage).

Glossary & quick reference

Technical terms used in this guide

Endemic — A species that occurs naturally only in one geographic area - for example, only in Mauritius, or only in the Mascarenes.

Indigenous / Native — A species that occurs naturally in a region but may also occur elsewhere.

Recalcitrant seed — A seed that loses viability quickly after collection. Cannot be dried or stored long-term. Most Mauritian endemics produce recalcitrant seeds.

Wildling — A young plant that has germinated naturally in the wild, often beneath its mother. Can be rescued and grown on in a nursery.

Semi-hardwood cutting — A cutting taken from a stem that has begun to harden at the base but is still slightly green at the tip - typically mid-season growth.

Hardening off — Gradually exposing a nursery-grown plant to outdoor conditions before final planting.

Damping-off — A fungal disease that causes sudden seedling collapse at soil level. Caused by excess moisture and poor air flow.

IUCN status — Conservation classification: LC (Least Concern), VU (Vulnerable), EN (Endangered), CR (Critically Endangered), EW (Extinct in Wild).

Rhizome — A horizontal underground stem - common in ferns. Carries growing tips and roots; the basis for fern division.

Epiphyte — A plant that grows on another plant (usually a tree) without being parasitic. Many ferns and orchids are epiphytic.

Quick reference - propagation methods at a glance

Method	Best for	Time to plant-out	See page
Seed	**Most endemics with available fruit**	12-24 months	**7**
Cuttings	**Shrubs, hard-to-germinate species**	8-14 months	**8**
Wildling rescue	**Species with abundant natural seedlings**	6-12 months	**9**
Fern division	**Mature fern clumps**	4-8 months	**10**

Sources, credits & further reading

This guide draws on the practical knowledge of Mauritian restoration practitioners and credible regional sources. Where propagation data was sparse for a species, we said so rather than speculate.

Key references

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With thanks to the EcoHaven nursery team at La Motte à Thérèse and Bar le Duc, whose daily practice is the real source of everything written here.

How you can help

- Volunteer at EcoHaven planting and propagation days.
- Document your own propagation trials and share results.
- Support MWF and other Mauritian conservation organisations.
- Choose endemic plants for your garden whenever you can.





EcoHaven - restoring the forest of Moka, one plant at a time.

2026

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