Project Infosheet

ACICRC23-20

Butterfly garden in the heart of San José

ASOCIACIÓN COSTARRICENSE
DE INTERCULTURALIDAD

Project Description:

Spirogyra is a butterfly farm located 10 minutes from downtown San José, Costa Rica and nested in the last forested stronghold of the metropolitan area, a tropical paradise in the centre of our busy capital city. It is for this reason that one of our goals is to preserve and enrich the total area of the farm (7.000m2) and we hope in the near future to open trails, which have proper information about the flora and fauna of the place and will allow visitors to tour the entire farm.

The proximity to the Simón Bolívar Zoo (currently closed) makes our project even more interesting because both form part of the banks of the Torres River, where there is still a small gallery forest, which functions as a natural air filter and oxygen producer.

It is also a refuge for a large number of small mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and insects, including butterflies. The well-known writer P.J. De Vries, writes in his books on Costa Rican butterflies, he refers to the Central Valley as "a corridor between the Atlantic and Pacific slopes, where butterfly species can be observed flying together, which are normally confined to different areas".

So in our 350m2 Exhibition Garden, visitors can see several of Costa Rica's most beautiful butterfly species, observe their life cycle and how to reproduce them in captivity.

Vision: Spirogyra is through the responsible reproduction of butterflies a model of eco-sustainable development. Throughout the year, we receive groups of students in our facilities in order to teach them, among other things, that it is possible to make rational use of our natural resources, causing a minimum impact on the environment.

Mission: In addition to reproducing, conserving and exporting 20 different species of butterflies native to Costa Rica, as well as environmental education to all visitors and educational entities. Spirogyra is also an agent for several groups of women, belonging to rural communities, close to our primary forests, where the cultivation of butterflies is an alternative to the traditional sources of work, trades that exert a continuous pressure for the logging of forests.

Contact person in the project:

Name: Jamie
Position: Volunteering coordinator
E-mail: spirogyrabutterflygarden@gmail.com
Tel: (+506) 8677 9266

Main tasks:

- **Laboratory work:** Keeping it tidy and clean, collecting plants to feed larvae, transferring fresh food to the larvae, cleaning drawers with water and chlorine, changing organic paper, keeping materials in their respective places, keeping a record of the data in the production sheet (hatching, pupae, larvae, and eggs collected), etc.

- **Garden work:** Weeding and pruning the plants, composting the plants and maintaining the compost bin, cleaning the garden benches, ensuring that the larvae have food, eggs and pupae; maintenance of the butterfly feeders, taking care of the land turtles from the turtle pond, taking care of the waterfall in the turtle pond, taking care of the orchids, cleaning and maintaining order in the cellar, etc.

- **Tasks of the Naturalist Guide:** The volunteer has to have knowledge of the butterflies and biology which he/she will obtain after a few months in the project, then it would be possible for them to do the tasks with the guides. To support in the education of visitors about ecology and the importance of butterflies in the ecosystem, as well as the introduction to the trail. Volunteers also needs to be open to work in administrative tasks.

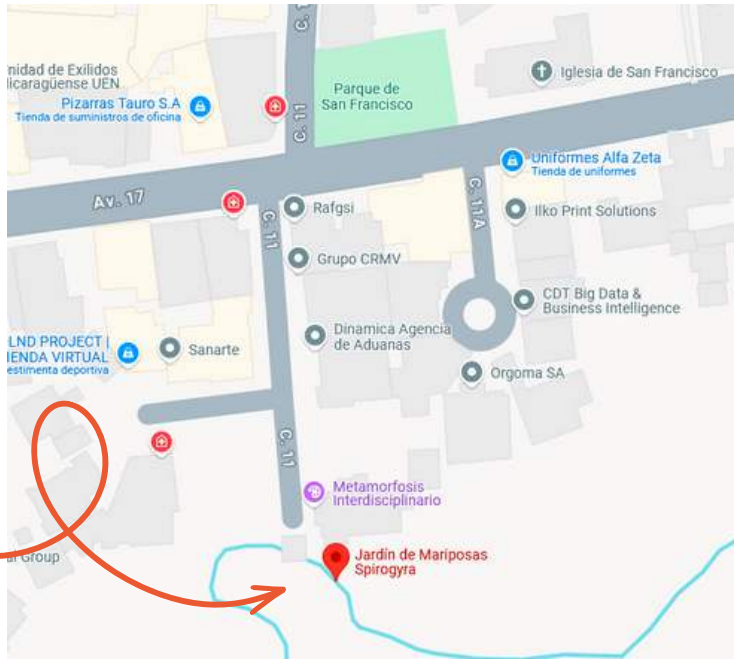
Main skills:

- To be a person interested in nature and the environment.
- To wear appropriate clothing (boots, working clothes, long pants, etc.).
- Bring working gloves.
- To respect the rules of the institution.
- To be open to do administrative work.
- To have computer skills.
- To have a basic level of English or Spanish.

How to get there?

Information will be provided depending on the location of the host family.

Location of the project:
Jardín de Mariposas
Spirogyra
https://maps.app.goo.gl/wCFFyM1JE9fGvebe7



Host situation:

Local Family

Host project

Families will always be located in San José or surroundings in order to keep a reasonable distance between the hosting situation and the project, so volunteers will normally need to take one or two local buses in order to get to the placement and go back to the hosting situation. Families can be very different from each other.

Work schedule:

Monday to friday from 8 am to 2 pm, days are flexible and can be communicated with the project.

There are no specific seasons as there are always butterflies to be cared for or visitors to be attended to.

Volunteers needs to be flexible with schedule it might change depending on the needs of the project.

Vacation and/or free time:

Vacations have to be communicated with the project with at least one week anticipation and have to be authorised by him. Neither Christmas Week nor Easter Week are set vacations in the project.

For Short-Term Volunteers: Days off are negotiable depending on the duration of the program.

Emergency Protocol:

In case of an emergency, the coordinators will identify and evaluate the situation, according to this, will either help with a first aid kit or support in going to the hospital and contact ACI.

There is a document for emergency exits and behaviour in case of earthquakes that will be passed to the volunteers.

Other important information:

- Volunteers working at Spirogyra should be constant and passionate people, in order to stay motivated during the whole period and to not fall into routine, they should really like to be in touch with nature and work in an calm enviroment.
- Bring gardening gloves.
- There are specific instructions for the use of mosquito repellent and sunscreen within the project. Please consult the project coordinator in person for more details.