

# ANNUAL REPORT

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2021



**MY FOREST**  
ARMENIA



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## THANK YOU ALL

- 3 Founder's statement

## MY FOREST ARMENIA

- 4 Our mission
- 4 Our values
- 4 Our goals

## OUR IMPACT IN 2021

- 6 Benjamin Gumuchdjian Nursery, Gugark
- 8 Debet nursery
- 10 Dr Gary and Linda Assarian Greenhouse, Vanadzor
- 12 Creating new forests
- 15 Challenges

## THE PEOPLE BEHIND

- 18 Those who bring our goals to life

## OUR SUPPORTERS

- 22 Donor Organisations
- 23 Individual Donors



# FOUNDER'S STATEMENT

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2021 has been a challenging yet rewarding year for us. We planted over 312,000 trees in Lori and Tavush regions on a territory of 104 ha, we planted our first pine trees and built our first greenhouse. We grew as an organization to become a team of 38 permanent staff, while more than 70 people from local communities were recruited to carry out planting and maintenance activities.

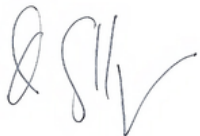
We also learned a lot in 2021. We learned to be persistent, to follow closely the health of our seedlings, to look for solutions, to experiment, study and persevere when nature brought unexpected challenges and to be even more patient. At every step we took, we were reinforced in our feeling that we are on the right path, creating forests is difficult and challenging, but we cannot afford to fail or to be late anymore. Climate is changing faster and faster, Mother Nature needs us to be more mindful of what we are doing. More than that: She needs us to regain her health. For our own benefit and the benefit of future generations.

At every step of our journey, we saw how you - our partners, our donors, our supporters - encouraged and inspired us. We are happy to share with you that even if our plans seemed ambitious, we were able to achieve our goals.

2022 is going to be an even greater year for our organization. The seriousness, dedication and professionalism of our team has been noticed by many. Several organizations in Armenia and abroad have expressed their wish and their enthusiasm to support us. We are looking forward to starting together to make a positive and meaningful impact.

Our forestry scientists are now working on planning the reforestation of a big and beautiful area of 1500 ha with ideal soil and climate conditions in Lori region. Once covered with trees and shrubs, it will become an amazing forest with a strong ecosystem and rich biodiversity. This is a 15 year project and perhaps less if more people join us.

Thank you all.



**ANDRE GUMUCHDJIAN**  
The Founder of My Forest Armenia





# MY FOREST ARMENIA

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## OUR MISSION

By empowering local communities, under the direction of scientists and expert foresters, our mission is to sustainably increase forest coverage and to preserve biodiversity by planting only endemic species.

## OUR VALUES

We ascribe to the following values:

- **Transparency**
- **Responsibility**
- **Efficiency**
- **Care**

## OUR GOALS

The goal of our organization is to plant 400.000 trees per year, or about 120 hectares of new forest every year. We hope to increase these numbers with time.



# OUR IMPACT IN 2021

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**2021 was an important year for the development of our organization's nurseries and various infrastructures.**



BENJAMIN GUMUCHDJIAN  
NURSERY, GUGARK

The development and improvement of infrastructures of the Benjamin Gumuchdjian nursery - our flagship nursery - continued in 2021. Our goal is to continually increase the quality of the seedlings, which directly impacts their chances of survival in afforestation areas. High quality seedlings have a better chance of withstanding adverse weather conditions.

## INCREASE IN PRODUCTION

We did various improvements to increase productivity. We extended the irrigation system and added 40 sprinkler heads and their supports in the nursery. This enabled us to use irrigation water more efficiently and more thoroughly, especially for the one-year-old pine trees, which need water from the very beginning.

Another serious concern was the presence of mice in the nursery, as they ate the roots of many young seedlings in 2020. In February 2021, we brought 2 cats, and they turned out to be quite efficient at eliminating this problem. We lost almost no seedlings.

We grow 600,000 seedlings in the Benjamin Gumuchdjian nursery, from which 99,000 were planted in afforestation areas in 2021, while the rest will be ready to be planted in spring and autumn 2022.

## INSTALLATION OF A WATER TREATMENT SYSTEM

We installed a small ecological water treatment system, designed to treat sewage water. The water coming out from the system is 98% purified and is used for the irrigation of seedlings, thus optimizing our use of water resources.





DEBET  
NURSERY



## IRRIGATION SYSTEM INSTALLATION

This was a difficult and challenging job. Seedlings suffered greatly in 2020. We absolutely needed to provide irrigation water at the Debet nursery. The only source of water close by was from a river in a gorge 80 meters below. Our task was to raise the water from the gorge without using electricity. We installed a zero energy pump at the bottom and a 200-meter tube to collect water upstream. The tube requires regular maintenance, but the nursery is finally provided with irrigation water regularly.

## IMPROVEMENT OF THE WORKERS' HOUSE

In 2021, we did some improvements to our employees' cottage, by adding a covered terrace. This protects the nursery employees from the rain and the sun during their lunch break.

## INCREASE IN PRODUCTION

Thanks to the irrigation system, the productivity in Debet nursery increased significantly. The fact that it is situated at 1000m altitude means that the vegetation period is longer, which allows the plants to grow and develop longer before being planted in afforestation areas.

The nursery was busy from March to November. It supplies 200,000 seedlings annually, out of which 45,000 were planted in spring and autumn of 2021.





DR. GARY AND LINDA  
ASSARIAN GREENHOUSE,  
VANADZOR

In collaboration with the Armenian National Agrarian University, we completed the installation of the greenhouse with state of the art infrastructures on the premises of their Vanadzor branch, in front of the main building.

The greenhouse will allow us to grow about 72,000 seedlings in 2022 with a closed root system, in containers. Seedlings grown in such conditions are more viable and will ensure higher efficiency after planting. It will also allow us to grow plants that are difficult to grow in open nurseries.

The presence of a greenhouse at the university will allow students to participate, study and make research on many different aspects.



# CREATING NEW FORESTS

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**Shirakamut**  
Total area: 86 ha  
Planted: 35 ha

**Vahagni**  
Total area: 6 ha  
Planted: 6 ha

**Jrashen 1**  
Total area: 110 ha  
Planted: 81 ha

**Dilijan National Park**  
Total area: 20 ha  
Planted: 20 ha

ARMENIA

Aragats

Sevan

1556 m

Mashavera

E117

P51

A310

A304

A328

P50

A310

A330

A329

A330

Kasagh

T'ezh Lerr

Marmarik

Aastev

Aparan

Meghradzor

Tsovagyugh

Gora Lalvar

Gora Urasar

Lori

Akori

Tavush

Ijeva



Every day throughout the year we prepare for the day when we will have to climb a mountain with an extended team and open the new planting season. We planted 144,000 trees and sown a record number of 168,000 oak acorns. These numbers include around 30.000 trees that we replaced in Shirakamut.

In our second year of operation, we are already very close to our annual objective.

**We have planted 312,000 trees in the spring and autumn of 2021 in an area of more than 104 hectares.**

We also took care of the trees planted in 2020. Maintenance of planted trees is key to the success of creating forests. It is an ongoing process until the seedlings are about 3 years old and can grow on their own in the wild.

We have planted different species, all endemic to Armenia, like Caucasian oak, ordinary pine, field maple, white maple, redbud maple, ash, as well as bushes such as spirea, elder, privet, etc.

# CHALLENGES

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We knew from our previous experience that we needed to prepare properly for late spring frosts. This year, frosts did not bypass our Benjamin Gumuchdjian nursery, which, being located on a higher altitude, is more prone to frostbite than the Debet nursery. When plants germinated, we started to monitor the temperature closely. And when negative temperatures were forecasted, we immediately took action by covering the new sprouts with straw, which increased the surface freezing horizon by a few centimeters. It played a decisive role in the protection of the seeds.

For the seedlings of coniferous trees, with heights of 15cm or more, a different strategy needed to be applied. Here the fight against frostbite by mulching had one significant downside: there was a risk that the young stems of the plants would be damaged during the laying of the straw. We decided to use an alternative approach, that is, to create isolated fire hearths along the lines of coniferous trees, which would create a surface heat layer, so that the plants would not freeze.

The fight against frost had its results; already by mid-spring, healthy and viable plants were growing in our nursery. Most of them have already found their final location in our afforestation areas.



In June 2021 we had another type of climate extreme, this time it was a drought in the Shirakamut afforestation land. The root system of the young seedlings was not yet developed enough to absorb moisture from the lower layers of the soil, and the seedlings were drying out by the thousands.

Luckily there was a small irrigation canal nearby. We immediately installed 4.000m of pipes on the slopes of the 30ha mountain so that it would be possible to irrigate the entire area. Two pumps were put into action and 8 workers watered the entire area around the clock for 8 weeks. This allowed tens of thousands of young trees to be saved. In addition, we started using mulching by putting hay around the plants to preserve moisture.

In order to combat future dryness, we started in the fall a new technique: adding zeolite in each hole where seedlings or acorns are planted. Zeolite is a natural mineral that holds humidity. By releasing slowly the humidity in the soil, it will help the roots overcome a period of dryness. We will monitor the optimum amount to be used for each plant.

Another action we took to increase the chances of survival of our seedlings is to improve our procedures of transporting the seedlings up the mountain to keep their roots humid until the moment they are planted.

Now, looking back and seeing the living plants starting to grow in that area, we feel even stronger about the value of each tree. This made us realize even more the extreme difficulty and the many challenges of starting a new forest. But at the same time, this very difficulty reinforces, in all of us, our resolve and our motivation to do all it takes to succeed.



# THE PEOPLE BEHIND

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While the seeds are transformed into seedlings in our nurseries, our forestry specialists, Vahe Martirosyan and Taron Aleksanyan, accompanied by our founder Andre Gumuchdjian, explore the lands of Lori region to find the appropriate spots and evaluate their potential. After that, it's a long preparatory work to discuss with the communities and start the administrative process to secure the land.

Almost 80% of the permanent employees of our organization are from Lori region, they work in our two nurseries. Up to 90 people from Lori region join them during the tree planting and maintenance season. People working in the mountains take their mission seriously. They are directly involved in this crucial work and feel deeply the importance of creating new forests.



*“Probably I will not see the forest I am planting, but my grandchildren know that in several years there will be a forest on this mountain. I am glad that they will remember me also this way”, says our employee Mrs. Karine, a little excited.*



“I am very happy that our family has a job today. At first, I came alone, but when I saw what an interesting and powerful job we were doing, I offered my wife to join me, and now we are both involved, we work with great pleasure”, says Vahram, one of our seasonal workers.

“For all of us, planting a tree is much like the birth of a child. After birth, parents take care of him, take him to nursery, school and one day he starts living on his own. The same is with trees: the trees are born in the nursery, we take care of them and when they have grown enough, we send them to the wild to live independently”, says Suren, who works at our “Benjamin Gumuchdjian” nursery.



# THANK YOU!

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**We thank our supporters for significant achievements in 2021 . Thanks to you, our goals are achieved in small but steady steps.**

# DONOR ORGANISATIONS



**MISSERLIAN**



**DeciBio**



**SYNOPSIS**  
Silicon to Software

**BESTRONGER**



**GUMUCHIAN**  
*Designed by women for women*

**LIBECO**  
BELGIAN LINEN  
— est. 1858 —



# INDIVIDUAL DONORS

## MONTHLY

- Serge Artunoff
- Samvel Asatryan
- Marleen Duerinckx
- Philippe Francois
- Andre Gumuchdjian
- Djanik Gumuchdjian
- Olya Hakobyan
- Ani Harutyunyan
- Alexander Kazhyan
- Racho Manukyan
- Lilith Martirosyan
- Nare-Arpi Martirosyan
- Christian van den Bogaert

## ONE-TIME

- Garen Arslanian
- Dr Gary Assarian
- Zaven Der-Haroutounian
- Marleen Duerinckx
- Gaspard Figuiere
- David and Patricia Grayson
- Charlotte Hochart
- Svetlana Hovhannisyan
- Vana Kassardjian
- Loucine Buton Kerovpyan
- Armine Khachatrian
- Nairi Khatchadourian
- Mher Khatchadourian
- Korioun Khatchadourian
- Chahé and Eguiz Kirokian
- Nino Martin
- Tatev Petrosyan
- Bernard Saey
- Panash & Saanvi Shah
- Hovsep Tahta
- Andrés Tahta
- Yeria Toranian
- Areg Vardanian

A big thanks also to all those who make a donation wishing to remain anonymous.

If you have not planted a tree in your life, now is the right time to join us, not only to plant a tree, but also to restore the forest coverage of our country. Join our program and donate 1, 5, 10 or more trees per month or just make a one-time donation.



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