

Pass It On®...

Reforestation the Amazon, 100 Million Trees at a Time.

How skydiving legend Luigi Cani's daring stunt is aimed at breathing new life into our world

The Earth is one giant, living organism, and we have the privilege of calling it home. We enjoy the beauty of blue skies, the shade of magnificent trees, the lulling motion of waves.

Being able to breathe clean air is largely a result of the way plants retrieve carbon and purify the air on our planet home. The Amazon forest functions as Earth's lungs. But deforestation has made it difficult for the jungle to do its job.

Though there are many efforts to plant trees, the remoteness of the jungles makes it difficult. Drop in Luigi Cani, the world-record-holding skydiver who completed a wingsuit jump on a motorcycle into the Grand Canyon and felt like there was something he could do. After 14,000 jumps, Cani was ready to put his skills to good use.

"I've been jumping for 25 years, and I've always pushed the limits with risky jumps," he says. "Now, I'm 51 years old, and I don't have that drive for danger anymore. I want to do something to help."

Cani picked a 100-square-kilometer patch of land that needed to be reseeded in the northern part of the rainforest. The planning was meticulous. For two months, seeds were collected by hand from nearby native plants. A biodegradable box the size of a refrigerator was designed and built, a landing site was identified, and all the permits were secured from the local and federal governments. The box had its own drag parachute to slow it down so Cani could catch up to it as it fell, open it at the right altitude, then safely jettison away and deploy his chute.

"It was the only jump where I held my breath the entire time," Cani recalls. "I struggled to hold the box. I nearly broke my wrist and fingers. I managed to stabilize myself at about 6,000 feet."

The result was a cloud of 100 million seeds, bursting from the box like mad insects and settling into a gentle storm of potential trees floating from the sky in a beautiful eruption of life. The seeds

drifted to exactly where they needed to be. Ultimately, 95% would germinate successfully. Like a proud father, Cani charts their growth via satellite images. Some of the trees will reach 50 meters in height, a tall cluster of sentries guarding the Amazon for generations to come.

Cani isn't done with his efforts to care for our earthly home. His next jump will bring skydiving and ocean cleanup together. "Like the seed drop, this next project will have real meaning behind it." Dare we say, deep meaning?

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