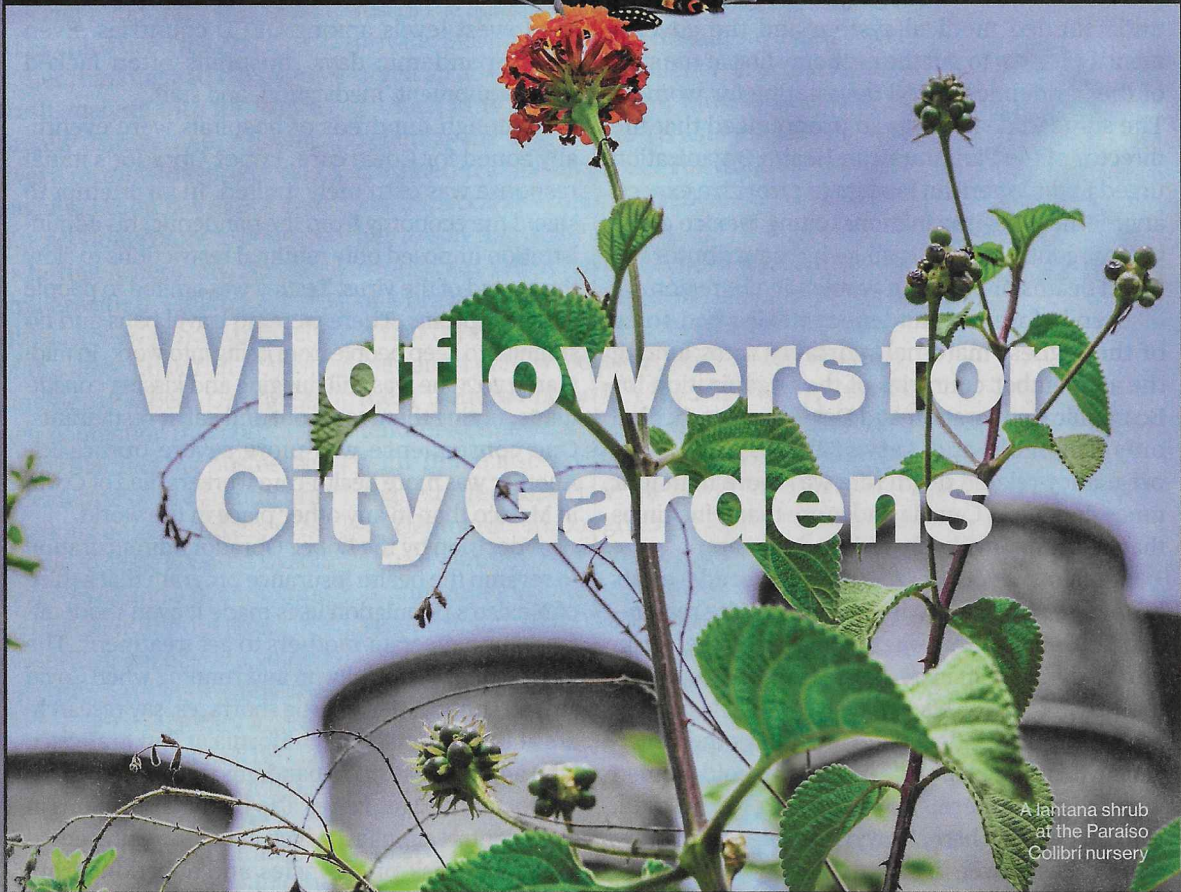


Sustainability



Wildflowers for City Gardens

A lantana shrub at the Paraíso Colibrí nursery

Rocío Meneses, who grows native Mexican plants, is part of a movement working to bolster declining hummingbird populations

With its temperate climate and rich diversity of wildflowers, Mexico is a haven for hummingbirds. It boasts 58 species, including all 19 types seen in the US and Canada. The tiny birds proved elusive, however, when Rocío Meneses tried to catalog each species, starting in 2013, while co-writing a book called *Hummingbirds of Mexico*.

Meneses found that the best way to glimpse their flitting wings was to wait by the native plants whose nectar they love to drink. “We became searchers of flowers rather than hummingbirds,” she says. Now Meneses travels at

least twice a month to remote parts of central and northwestern Mexico to find flowers to reproduce for her company, Paraíso Colibrí (Hummingbird Paradise), which sells plants to gardeners and corporate clients.

The business is part of a movement aimed at stemming the birds’ population decline by creating gardens to feed them in Mexican cities. Battered by climate change, deforestation, and an underground trade selling dissected hummingbirds as love charms, 13 of Mexico’s species are considered at risk of extinction. About 60% of Mexican species are imperiled by climate change, and many are losing habitat to relentless urbanization, according to research by María del Coro Arizmendi, a professor and ornithologist at Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM). Arizmendi runs a hummingbird observation center and started a city garden project to provide sanctuaries for the birds in 2014. “This country is becoming urban, and it seems there’s no way back,” she