

BATTY ABOUT AGAVE

When most people think about pollination, they think about bees and butterflies. However, many are unaware of the work of their nocturnal co-workers: bats! At night, bats around the world keep over 530 flowering plants healthy and fertilized while their insect colleagues sleep. In Mexico, the lesser long-nosed bat helps cultivate one very important plant.

THIS IS THE LESSER LONG-NOSED BAT...

The lesser long-nosed bat survives on flower nectar and lives in hot, arid places. When they drink from the night-blooming flowers of the deserts they call home, they transfer loose pollen from flower to flower.



Of the 620 plant families known, **67** rely on nectar-feeding bats for pollination!



...AND THIS IS THE AGAVE IT CARES FOR.

Agave is one of the many plants pollinated mostly or exclusively by nectar-drinking bats, and it is particularly reliant on the lesser long-nosed bat. Agave is used as both a sweetener and a biofuel, but it is best known as the key ingredient in tequila and mezcal.

The lesser long-nosed bat also pollinates plants like cacti, figs, dates, mangoes and peaches.

NATIVE HABITAT OF THE LESSER LONG-NOSED BAT



WHAT MAKES A TEQUILA SAFE FOR BATS?

Tequila is highly popular in the United States, but very few agave plantations provide enough food for lesser-long nosed bats. Many planters harvest agave just before the plants are able to flower, ensuring sugar levels are at their peak for their liquor. Agave is then replanted using cuttings, preventing bats from feeding from flowers they would otherwise be able to access freely.

Bat-safe tequila brands allow at least 5% of their agave to fully bloom so that bats can cross-pollinate the flowers. Bat-safe tequila brands include Siete Leguas, Tequila Tapatio, and Tequila Cascahuín.



Sources: Bat Conservation International, Tequila Inter-change Project, NRDC, The Plant List