



Finca la Isla's Newsletter



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Best Foot Forward in 2010! Reduce, Recycle, Rethink!

With another international conference on global warming and climate change behind us, it is becoming increasingly apparent that change must begin with individuals and must be a bottom up process rather than top down.

What can each of us do as an individual to protect and support the environment? Luckily there are many answers. Here are a few suggestions and remember: every journey begins with a single step.

- **Eat local foods:** not only are they fresher, they are likely to be produced by small family farms or collectives which means less packaging and less time and energy spent in transit. Or grow your own!
- **Collect rainwater** for drinking or use a replaceable filter for well or city water. Bottled water requires an enormous amount of energy to produce, package and deliver plastic bottles.
- **Buy recyclable or reusable containers.** We know Recic-Caribe recycles plastic #1 and #2, so look for those numbers on all plastic bottles, boxes, bags: avoid everything else!
- **Take cloth bags,** or rice bags, or used plastic bags with you shopping. Politely refuse plastic bags at the farmers' market or store.
- **Compost kitchen scraps,** garden clippings and paper (including used tissue paper). The

torn paper and garden clippings provide carbon and the kitchen scraps provide nitrogen – together they make food for your plants and trees.

- **Turn off lights** and electrical appliances when not in use. Gradually replace regular lightbulbs with more energy efficient bulbs.
- **Cycle.** The roads are muddy or dusty and always bumpy, but cycling or walking is the best way to experience the beautiful place we live in.
- **Use baking soda, lemon juice or vinegar** for cleaning countertops, sinks, stoves, toilets, tiles and just about every other surface in the home. Dilute one part water to one part vinegar for an all purpose cleaner. Mix the juice of one lemon with ½ cup cooking oil for a great wood polish that also cleans. Use a small amount of baking soda as a deodorizer or an abrasive for cleaning pots or stubborn stains.
- **Smile.** By taking a moment, or several, each day to consciously think positive or pleasant thoughts we slow down our heart rate, raise our appreciation for the life we have and simplify our needs.

Have a safe, healthy and happy 2010!

ATEC's school supply drive continues-

School Starts in February, [there is still time to give the Gift of Education](#), the drive continues! We are striving to adopt as many students as possible in two Indigenous Schools in Valle de Estrella: Boca Cuen and Gavilan.

Last year through generous donations, we were able to adopt 110 students. So far this year we've raised funds for all of the schools supplies and a quality backpack for at least 17* kids and complete uniforms for three students.*
A total of \$881.73 so far!

*Based on estimates of what the school supplies and uniforms will cost.

How to Help:

Drop off donations of cash or supplies at ATEC or go to the website www.greencoast.com/news and follow the clicks to donate online with PayPal or to find out bank account numbers for BN or BCR.

Donations are Tax deductible in CR and the USA!

And 100% of your donation goes to purchasing school supplies!

January's Issue:

- [Best Foot Forward!](#)
- [ATEC's School Drive](#)
- [Grow Your Own!](#)
- [This month's crop: Ginger](#)
- [News from the Farm](#)

This month's crop: Ginger

This time of year ginger plants are dying back and the rhizomes are plump and juicy – the best time to harvest.

Ginger has been used for centuries as both a flavoring and a medicine. Take it as a tea to combat: fatigue; nausea; colds and coughs; diarrhea; to aid digestion and warm the body and spirit. Combine it with chili and honey for a great coffee substitute.

Pineapple Ginger sauce

- 1 ripe pineapple, skinned and sliced
- 1 Tblsp. fresh ginger, sliced
- 1 red chili pepper, seeded and cut in half
- 1/2 green sweet pepper, sliced
- 2 Tbl sp fresh culantro, chopped
- ¼ cup orange juice
- salt and pepper to taste:

In a heavy pan over high heat (or on the barbecue) roast the pineapple slices, ginger slices, and pepper until brown. Remove from pan. De-glaze the pan by placing orange juice in the pan and stir to loosen any browned bits of pineapple, ginger or pepper. Remove the pan from the heat.

Chop the pineapple, pepper and ginger in 1/4-inch dice and return to pan along with the culantro. Mix together.

Serve over chicken, fish or tempeh filets with noodles and fresh veggies.



Grow your own! Ginger

If you have access to soil, you can have a garden. Growing your own food doesn't need a

finca: a pot or a bucket is a good place to start. And you don't have to grow a whole meal, concentrate at first on one or two things that you like and will use; flavorings are a good choice.

Ginger

The rhizome or root of *Zingiber officinale*. The Ginger family is enormous and encompasses bananas and heliconias, but the culinary variety is a simple, rather small and unobtrusive plant. And in this climate, it's very easy to grow.

Shoots will sprout from the 'eyes' of ginger roots left in a dark place in the kitchen. Simply allow the shoots to reach 5cm then divide the root into nice 5-10cm segments, each segment containing a shoot or an 'eye'. Let the segments air dry for a day or two, then plant in the garden, (or in a sturdy pot), just below the surface with the shoot and the eye above ground.

Ginger prefers a shady spot with some dap-

pled light. If planting in a dry spell water lightly every other day. The shoot will grow to about a meter in length and will have several pairs of blade like leaves. As the root grows below ground more stems will appear and your ginger patch will grow. You might see very simple flowers, somewhat like torch or shampoo ginger blooms but very basic.

Ginger has a dormant period running roughly late January through March, the stalks will die back – this is the best time to harvest your roots. Gently dig or brush away the earth from the roots, most will be very close to the surface. Leave some to resprout, and your ginger patch will serve you well. Although the best time to harvest is January through March, ginger can be harvested throughout the year, look for older rhizomes and leave the greener roots. (The younger the root the milder the flavor.) Anytime you use ginger save a little piece for planting: soon you'll have a strong patch which will offer plenty of spice for cooking and home remedies.



ATEC, (Association of Talamancan Ecotourism and Conservation) is a non-profit organization with a downtown office offering wonderful local tours, a communication center, Internet and everything a traveler might need. ATEC would like to thank the following persons and groups for their support in the School Drive:

THANKS to

www.ecoaventura.co.cr,
www.bananaazul.com,
www.kayasplace.com,
Karen and Wilbur Jordon,
www.pachamamacaribe.com,
www.tierradesuenoslodge.com,
Finca La Isla
Botanical Garden,
www.geckoeslodge.com,
www.beachchikdesigns.com,
www.puertoviejosatellite.com,

www.greencoast.com, the Pura Vida Project, the families: Hedges, Ohrt, Heffener, Mader, Meixner, Ripley, Carlson, and anonymous.

And thanks to the following for donating supplies: The Boy Scouts of Canada, Mitzi's efforts at UGA, 2 friends from Punta Uva, and other folks who have dropped off supplies at ATEC anonymously.

Permaculture Workshops Peter will be holding 2 half day workshops on Permaculture and Natural Gardening.

**Tuesday 9th Feb, 9am to 1pm:
Permaculture and Natural Gardening techniques.** This workshop will focus on caring for the soil, working with compost and micro-organisms and developing general gardening and troubleshooting skills.

**Thursday 25th Feb, 9am-1pm:
Propagation techniques for tropical plants and trees.** Focus on collecting, cleaning and planting seeds, growing from root and stem cuttings, air-layering and introduction to grafting.

Cost is 6000c per workshop, call 8829 4929 to reserve your place!

Community News Update:

Talamanca's local alternative and renewable energy cooperative, **CoopeTalamancaSos**, is kicking off a new project to produce biofuel out of used vegetable oil in the community! CoopeTalamanca is collecting your used vegetable oil and then processing it into a bio-diesel that is not only suitable for any diesel motor vehicle, but also far less contaminating! So, next time you have an extra patacón or french fry, remember to save your oil and contact CoopeTalamanca to see how you can get involved!

Contact Ashley at the Botanical Garden (2750-0046/8355-9200), Emily Yozell (2759-9150 o 8384-8397) or Catalino Telles

(Spanish, 2751-0671) for more information.

