



Finca la Isla Newsletter

Fall 2009



Welcome

To the first edition of Finca La Isla's Newsletter! We hope to provide residents and visitors alike with green tips and news for local living.

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Upcoming Workshops

We are pleased to announce a series of workshops for January through February. The workshops will focus on three areas:

Soil and plants:

- **Building healthy soil** forest floor 'technology', composting, mulching
- **Propagation** collecting seeds, cuttings, air-layering and grafting
- **Garden Design** for shade and sun

Living and local foods:

- **Fermentation** making pickles, sourdough, tempeh, kombucha and more
- **Edible landscaping**, or living on foods from the garden
- **Preservation** how to deal with abundance!

Local Culture and crafts

- **Local medicinals** and their uses
- **Basket making** in the Bribri tradition
- **Beauty products** with local ingredients

More information in the coming weeks, or call / visit the Garden or stall at the Farmers' market.

Eating Locally: We are what we eat

The old saying "We are what we eat" should be enough – do we want to be grown from hand collected seed, cared for by those who know us best, handpicked, lightly transported, fresh, vital, at our peak? Or do we prefer to be bred for looks rather than taste, sprayed with who knows what, picked unripe, left in cold storage, bumped around in transport for days or even weeks, and left to fester on a supermarket shelf?

Locally produced food is being called the "new organic": from the [100 mile diet](#) in British Columbia to the [Slow Food](#) movement in Italy and beyond, more people are turning to local farms and food sources.

But why do it?

- **Taste the difference.** At a farmers' market, most local produce has been picked inside of 24 hours. It comes to you ripe, fresh, and with its full flavor, unlike supermarket food that may have been picked weeks or months before. Close-to-home foods can also be bred for taste, rather than withstanding the abuse of shipping or industrial harvesting. **The downtown Puerto Viejo Farmer's Market takes place every Saturday 7-10 am.**
- **Know what you're eating.** Buying food today is complicated. What pesticides were used? Is that corn genetically modified? Was that chicken free range or did it grow up in a box? People who eat locally find it easier to get answers. Many build relationships with farmers whom they trust. And when in doubt, they can visit the farms and see for themselves.
- **Meet your neighbors.** Local eating is social. Studies show that people shopping at farmers' markets have 10 times more conversations than their counterparts at the supermarket. Volunteer at a local farm and you'll actually meet the people you pass on the street.
- **Get in touch with the seasons.** When you eat locally, you eat what's in season. You'll remember that mangosteen is the taste of September. Knowing the seasons for fruit and vegetables is a great way to stay in touch with your surroundings.
- **Discover new flavors.** Ever tried durian? How about purslane, chayote tips, yerba buena, or katuk? These are just a few of the new flavors it's possible to sample locally. Even familiar foods are more interesting for being fresher.
- **Explore your home, or your destination.** Visiting local farms is a great way to learn about local culture, practices and issues. Volunteering on a local farm is even better giving priceless firsthand experience of tropical living.
- **Save the world.** A study in Iowa found that a regional diet consumed 17 times less oil and gas than a typical diet based on food shipped across the country. The ingredients for a typical British meal, sourced locally, traveled 66 times fewer "food miles." Or we can just keep burning those fossil fuels and learn to live with global climate change, the fiercest hurricane seasons in history, wars over resources...
- **Support small farms.** Many people from all walks of life dream of working the land—maybe you do too. In areas with strong local markets, the family farm is reviving. By supporting small family farms we are supporting the Talamancan way of life – and the reason we are all here to enjoy it!
- **Give back to the local economy.** A British study tracked how much of the money spent at a local food business stayed in the local economy, and how many times it was reinvested. The total value was almost twice the contribution of a dollar spent at a supermarket chain.
- **Be healthy.** Eating from farmers' markets and cooking from scratch means

Farm News:

Botanical Garden: The garden is open Friday through Monday 10am to 4pm. Admission is \$5 per person, a self guided tour booklet is \$1 and available in Spanish, English, French, German and Dutch. Guided tours (\$10/person or minimum \$30) available, please book in advance. Telephone: 2750-0046. The garden experience includes seeing red poison dart frogs, and a delicious sampling where you can taste seasonal fruits and chocolate, and learn about spices like cinnamon, black pepper and vanilla.

Farm: We are busy with the major harvest of the year: Durian, Mangosteen, Rambutan, Langsat, Sapote Columbiano, Mabolo, and Black Pepper. The kitchen is busy preserving and drying, making jams, jellies, chutney and pickles, drying fruit and baking cookies. We are winding up the first stage of our Reforestation Project on the Pacific coast and getting the nursery ready for upcoming landscape projects here in town.

What's in Season

Mangosteen

Originally from Thailand, known as "the Queen of Fruits", mangosteen is a favourite to



many with its juicy flesh and a taste that is the perfect balance between sour and sweet. Rich in vitamins and anti-oxidants, scientists are also discovering the powerful medicinal properties of xanthones, a compound found only in mangosteen.

more vegetables and fewer processed products, a wider variety of foods, and more fresh food at its nutritional peak. You'll feel better than ever!

- **Create memories.** From the time socializing at the Farmers' Market to taking time to prepare meals with family or friends, cooking with local ingredients brings more awareness into mealtimes. More fun than microwave popcorn!
- **Have more fun while traveling.** Local eating can be a gateway to deeper experiences in your travels: searching for Farmers' Markets, meeting local farmers and growers give immediate insights into local culture and customs.

Adapted from "The 100-Mile Diet: A year of local eating" by A. Smith and J.B Mackinnon.

A taste of local:

Puerto Viejo has a thriving local Farmers' Market. The Farmers' Market takes place in downtown Puerto Viejo each Saturday rain or shine from 7am to 10am. Stop by for cheese, free range eggs and chickens, unpasteurized milk, yogurt, tempeh, breads, baked goods, fresh fruits and vegetables, locally produced organic chocolates, coffee, banana vinegar, coconut oil, noni-juice, locally made tortillas, dips and preserves. There's even locally made beauty products and jewelry! The market is a great place to meet locals, socialize and make plans over cake and coffee.

The Cahuita Farmers' Market in downtown Cahuita takes place every Sunday morning, 7 to 10am.

Reci-Caribe is back! Recycling in Puerto Viejo

We're glad to announce Reci-Caribe is back in action in partnership with the Biological Corridor of Caribbean Talamanca! This area is known internationally for its environmentalism and community cooperation. Visitors and local eco-businesses alike can contribute to the protection of the environment by recycling as much as possible to avoid sending large quantities of waste to the open air dump by the Sixaola River. Recycle your clean Aluminum, Glass and Plastic Beverage bottles (#1 PET). (At this point tin cans, tetrabrik or plastics other than #1 are not accepted). The recycling truck collects recycling from Manzanillo to Puerto Viejo, Hone Creek, Cahuita and BriBri every monday. Please rinse your recyclables!

Information adapted from *Cool Cool: The complete green resource guide* available at ATEC and other local eco-businesses. For more information contact Maurizio at cafeviejo@gmail.com

FREE event for families, hosted by Reci-Caribe!

Everyone is invited and encouraged to attend a fundraising event hosted by Reci-Caribe on **Sunday, October 11th**. The event will be held at the Cultural Center in downtown Puerto Viejo from 1:00pm to 6:00pm. There will be games, live music, information about Reci-Caribe, and tips on more sustainable living. For more details, to volunteer or donate, call ATEC at 2750. 0191.

Community News

Recycled Art!: Finca La Isla's Botanical Garden and ATEC are organizing a recycled art collective, preparing a variety of useful and environmental products. Make this holiday season a green one by supporting this initiative through buying recycled gifts and donating recycled goods: corks, used umbrellas, scrap clothing and material, newspaper clean plastic bags (including dog food bags, rice and flour sacks, etc), old hotel supplies (towels, pillows, etc) tin cans, old toys and flip flops. Donations are received at ATEC.

This newsletter was printed courtesy of ATEC. ATEC is Puerto Viejo's original ecotourism provider! Stop by our office located downtown on the main street.



We have internet, local art, cheap international calls, and so much more!

Tel: 2750.0191 and www.ateccr.org

