

# Rancho Mastatal Updates

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## Third Quarter 2014

*Chronic culture shock has been a condition that we've been living with since Robin and I met in the Peace Corps 20 years ago. We have made Latin America our home for much of our adult life and each year when we land at Newark International Airport for our annual family visit, we begin our assimilation to life back in the States. Costa Rica and the US are not the two most dissimilar countries on earth, but Mastatal and the greater Metropolitan NY area share few parallels. It's been so important to us to have had SILLY AL COLONES and his wonderful little house in lovely Montclair, NJ to make our transitions to and from each year over the past decade. I get excited like a kid on Christmas morning when seeing Al pull up curbside on a sunny fall day to begin our short trip to see what he has available to eat from his little prolific urban garden. Just prior to our most recent plane ride, we finished up another dynamic year at the Ranch. As always, it was intense, productive, educational, stressful and inspirational. Communal living on the edge of the rainforest on a working farm and hospitably center in a foreign country is a recipe to cure even the most difficult to entertain's boredom. As we oftentimes say to one another at the Ranch, "never a dull moment". On these trips to the States, we actually embrace occasional dull moments and an opportunity to recharge our depleted energy sources in an effort to prepare for another; the next to be our 14th! We have already secured our new apprentices, most whom will be joining us for the entire 2015 calendar year as we shift to a 1-year program, and made our extensive lists of what to buy while in a place served by the USPS and UPS. We will be working hard this fall to refine our evolving course proposals with hopes of offering a fully-accredited semester program in 2016 and hope to begin the arduous process of getting a new website up and running. We'll have a full project plate next year with a number of exciting developments on the horizon not the least a new whole foods processing kitchen that promises to ratchet up our commitment to local food security and an ever more resilient organism that we call The Ranch. Enjoy.*



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## RM Program News:

### *Advice for Developing a Permaculture Internship Program*

There is no better way to gain hands on experience in permaculture than by spending time on an established (or establishing) site and learning what the work entails day-in and day-out. Interning on a site should provide an equal exchange of one's labor for the opportunity to gain knowledge and skills. This is a risk mitigation strategy: it allows interns to develop their goals and interests before making a large financial investment for their own site. As a farmer or site director, one has the opportunity to leverage affordable labor in exchange for knowledge and often room and board as well.



*Robin supervising volunteers on Monday routine of baking homemade bread*

*photo by Aaron Drury*

□□ Two recent articles here on Permaculture News have done an excellent job of exploring this topic already, they can be found [here](#) and [here](#). I would like to continue this conversation by sharing our experiences over the last 13 years of running a highly successful internship program at Rancho Mastatal in Costa Rica. For a quick overview of the Ranch see a previous article [here](#).

*What are you offering? Who are you looking for?*

□□ Understanding the answer to these two questions is paramount for a successful program. What are your goals in hosting interns? To receive affordable labor, to empower younger generations, to spread the word of permaculture, to live in community? Once you understand your goal, you can begin finding individuals who match with what you offer. □□

There are many different programs out there, some of which are a full work-trade, some provide a bed but you have to harvest or purchase your own food, others charge money (this is how Rancho Mastatal operates). Each of these set ups and all the possibilities in between will create different expectations for incoming interns. □□

If you are going to charge money for the experience, then you will be expected to provide a much higher level of lodging, food, and learning opportunities. You should be prepared to teach, and must have the expertise to back it up. Also, remember that the more you charge the younger and less skilled your pool to draw from will become. □□

Much of the work to create a successful program comes down to clarity of expectations and good consistent communication. A simple tool we have used when first communicating with prospective interns is explaining what our project is and what it is not. Some examples: □□

- We are an education center, which means we are in the hospitality industry as well. Interns play an essential role in this. □□

- We are not a yoga or meditation center. While we encourage and support these activities they do not fall under our mission and we don't make organizational time for them. □ □
- We are not a Spanish school. There are ample opportunities in our community to practice Spanish, but interns will have to be particularly focused if this is one of their goals. □ □

Making clear statements like this on your website or online profile will quickly separate out individuals looking for something different. □ □

*What expectations do you have?* □ □

Managing expectations should be done from the moment you first communicate with a prospective intern. Your website, email or phone correspondence, facebook page, etc. are all opportunities to display what really occurs at your site. Don't over promise and under deliver. You don't have to do it all; just be clear about what projects will occur, what daily life is like, what teaching/training you will provide, and what type of work commitment you expect. □ □

Consider asking individuals to commit for longer periods of time. Our program began with a minimum one week stay for volunteers. This became a minimum of two weeks, and then we began a three month internship, which quickly became a six month internship, and just this year we fielded applications for a year-long apprenticeship. At first we were worried that the longer commitment would exclude many applicants, but so far that hasn't been the case. We had 65 applicants (and counting) for our 2015 program. The more time interns spend on-site, the more capable they become. It will be worth your time to provide excellent training up-front, knowing you will gain the benefits of a quality intern for the following few months. This is a win-win. □ □

Also consider incorporating a simple application form on your website. Ask about the individual's work ethic, their experience living in community, and what they hope to take away from their time at your site. Talk to people ahead of time. If you can, spend 20 minutes on the phone or Skype with the best candidates. It doesn't take long to quickly feel out someone and determine if they are a good fit or not. This past year we took the time to interview 35 candidates (for 5 positions), many of them multiple times. This is a large investment of our time, but when considering we plan on living a year of our lives with these individuals, it pays off. □ □

A few other pointers: □ □

Consider mature couples. Mature, successful couples are already in a relationship, meaning if they can get along with one person well they may have a higher chance of getting along with the community (this comes with plenty of exceptions). □ □

Have interns all arrive at the same time. If you have a one month minimum commitment for example, always set the first of the month (or whenever works best for you) as the date you expect interns to arrive. This makes training more consistent and less of a burden.

□ □ *What do interns need for room and board?* □ □

This is relatively simple. Interns aren't expecting to stay in the Ritz, but meeting a few basic needs will go a long way. This is what we have learned keeps people happy: □ □

Good food — it doesn't have to be fancy, but there should be plenty. We rely on large quantities of the staples (rice, beans, corn, yuca, plantain) and great condiments on the side (pickles, fermented beverages, hot sauce, etc). □ □

A good mattress — if you are providing a bed to sleep on, invest in a decent mattress. There is little more comforting than returning from a long day of work and falling down into a nice bed. □ □

Privacy — this becomes more and more important the longer interns are staying. This doesn't mean a private room or cabin for everyone, but the space to change clothes, read a book, or just decompress in quiet. Everyone needs personal space. □ □

*How to organize your work days?* □ □

There can be a lot going on in a single day at Ranch Mastatal. We often compare it to a beehive (on the good days) as everyone darts around the farm. There might be a group studying Wilderness First Aid, a tour from the National University of Costa Rica, a cob stomping party, and a trip to help a neighbor harvest beans — all on the same day. This doesn't even account for individual projects, cooking and cleaning, and general farm tours. Needless to say it can be busy. So how do we keep our core group of 10 to 15 working together effectively? □ □

First and foremost we stay relentlessly organized. We do this in many forms but primarily through daily work meetings and a weekend community check-in. These certainly take time, but given the size and complexity of our project it allows everyone to fill their day, jump in when needed, and in general feel like a positive contributing member of the farm. □ □

The schedule will always be changing, but stick with it as much as possible. New interns to the site want structure. They want to know when to show up and how they can be most helpful. Consistency in planning will help make this happen.

□ □ As for the work itself, use the following principles to create productive and fun days: □ □

Diversity — mix it up with some mindless manual labor and some skilled learning opportunities. If the work is going to include a lot of repetitive physical labor, say pouring a cement foundation, make sure to incorporate music or word games to keep people going. □ □

Creative problem solving — find a balance between what the farm needs and what interns want to learn. For example, we often have interns interested in developing a medicinal plant garden, but they don't understand the year-in and year-out maintenance of a project of this scale. So we ask them to dig deeper and figure out what they really want to practice. Is it propagating plants, gardening, processing herbs and tinctures, medicine/healing, or a dozen other subjects? Most often we can find a way to incorporate the root of their desire into an existing farm need. □ □

Accelerate succession — hold their hands a bit early on. Provide excellent training up-front in the basic farm maintenance tasks. Ask yourself what do we have to do every single day to keep your site running? The sooner interns can take over these tasks, the sooner they will feel independent and empowered. For us, this means training how to cook on our rocket stoves, harvest garden salads, sharpen and use basic farm tools, service our methane biodigester, and chop firewood. We spend the first few days of the internship on only these tasks and emphasize over and over again their importance. □ □

Use biological resources — rely on the interns to fill much of their time. Don't micromanage their time. They need space to socialize, explore the region/neighborhood/forest, and create their own experiences, especially outside of the work day. Let them organize this individually or as a group. □ □ Each element should have many functions — evenly distribute chores, in particular cooking and cleaning, amongst everyone. You want multi-talented interns and no intern wants to be stuck cooking lunch alone every single day. It is common for interns comfortable in the kitchen to spend all day there and quickly burn themselves out. Make sure everyone is provided training and consequently participates in the essential functions of the site. □ □

### *Harvest the yield*

□ □ As you can see, a successful internship program requires a significant amount of time and energy. Knowing your goals, managing expectations, providing good room and board, consistent communication, and creating an organized work day is the up-front workload you will need to put in to harvest the yield of a functioning, fun, and productive intern crew. The world needs more individuals building the hard skills associated with permaculture design and land regeneration. These individuals need a place to practice and prepare themselves. A quality internship program can do just this. □ □

For folks interested in learning more about the Rancho Mastatal Apprenticeship in Sustainable Living program, the language we use, our application process and more, please check out our website [here](#).

### **Building Report:**

#### ***Angie and Leti's Real Cob Mix***

This song was written while mixing cob for the new shower and composting toilet out at the Honey Hut.

Get up, get on up  
Get up, get on up

It's Friday at the Ranch  
We're chilling, it's Leti and Ang  
Mixing that cob up  
Sweating it out down by the Hut

Get up, get on up



*Stomping and making cob*

Get up, get on up

It's clay, sand, and straw  
Seen better mixes? I bet naw!  
You ask if it's level and plumb...  
What the hell, you think we're dumb?

Get up. get on up  
Get up, get on up

Whatchya know 'bout cob? Woo!  
Whatchya know 'bout cob? Woo!  
When your hands get dirty, your feet get dirty...  
Next thing ya know, you get a lil' flirty!

What you know 'bout cob? Woo!  
What you know 'bout cob? Woo!  
Got a handprint on my shoulder,  
and I'm feeling a little bit bolder!

Get up, get on up  
Get up, get on up

We're the Honeys of the Hut  
When we stomp, we shake our butts  
So the next time you're in this shower,  
you're going to feel our feminine power!

## Conservation Update:

### *2014 Christmas Bird Count*

The Mastate Charitable Foundation recently funded a bird identification training program to teach 20 young, local adults who aspire to become Costa Rica's next generation of birders. Upon completing the curriculum, they're first task will be to contribute to and participate in the International Christmas Bird Count in and around Mastatal. The event will take place in late-November and is being led by Leonel (Leo) Delgado Pereira, a park guard at the La Cangreja National Park, and a number of respected ornithologists from within country. Leo is expecting 40 birders for the 2-day event and hopes to make this a yearly highlight event in our region. Birding is slowly growing in popularity in and around Mastatal due to our relatively close proximity to the capitol, our breathtaking scenery and of course the incredible number of bird



*Birding Club*

species, some rare and unique, that call Mastatal home for all or part of the year. As we work together as a community to diversify our economy, it may prove possible in the not too distant future to fully support a few local bird guides and we hope that this initiative continues to result in the sustainable growth of our town.

## **Farm Facts:**

### ***Holistic Management***

When I start thinking about the upcoming agricultural season my mind goes straight to all the possibilities and decisions that lie ahead. It can feel overwhelming to know which steps to take. Do I pursue developing the nursery as a micro-enterprise, do we invest time and resources in developing extensive path systems, do we expand our Sacha Inchi trellising system? Questions such as these go on and on, around and about in my head. How do I choose where to allocate our physical and financial capital? How do I know a certain action will lead me toward my desired goal?



Let's look at the possibility of expanding the nursery. With permaculture in my tool-kit I feel comfortable that I can design and build an efficient and functioning space. That part is easy. But how do I know whether or not I have the capacity to manage this space, or if this addition would be the best bang-for-the-buck addition to the Ranch? Will the decision one way or the other improve my life and those in the community around me? When we start asking these questions, permaculture as a design science comes up short and another tool becomes necessary. Fortunately one exists. It's called Holistic Management (HM)

Holistic Management is a framework for empowering decision making that is socially, environmentally, and economically sound in the short, medium and long term. Essentially to practice HM you do the following, as described by former HM educator Bruce Ward:

“Form a goal for yourself that describes everything that is important in life, test every one of your actions towards that set of words, assume you could be wrong, monitor – whether it’s, financial, ecological, social – for early evidence it could be wrong and if it’s wrong, make another decision again towards how you want things to be, not solve the problem but to get towards how you want life to be.”

Increasingly folks practicing permaculture are realizing the need for a decision making framework that balances out the design framework. I've put together the following Holistic Management framework for the Rancho Mastatal Agricultural Systems. This is what we call a Whole within a Whole in HM, in that the agricultural systems are a whole within the greater Ranch whole. This is a test run and not a true exercise in HM because all the key decision makers were not present to help form the following Holistic Context.

My hope in exploring this avenue is three fold: □

- Become more proficient in the use of HM in order to start on a path of teaching and facilitating this process for others.
- Begin introducing these ideas to the Rancho Mastatal community in order to consider applying this framework to our entire organization.
- Begin applying these ideas to my personal work and life.

Because others have already summarized HM, its history, implications, and use, far better than I ever could, I would like to encourage anyone interested to take the time to fully read through the following [article; watch the videos and follow the links to explore more](#). It may all seem a bit complex at first, but by even going through this small exercise myself, I feel that much more empowered to make good decisions.

The following is the temporary Holistic Context for the Rancho Mastatal Agricultural Systems.

### **Whole Under Management**

#### *Decision Makers*

This is an inclusive group of anyone making decisions day-to-day.

- Primary: Scott, Rachel, Timo, Laura, Robin, Nic, and Chepo
- Secondary: Apprentices will have a role in daily decision making, but less so on big picture processes. Other employees, particularly Junior and Alex play a role in decisions.

#### *Resource Base*

This includes: □

- everyone that will be influenced by our decisions.
- all physical and intellectual resources that allow us to generate revenue toward achieving our goals.
- The Ranch property, tools, nursery, garden guild office, nearby forests, and neighboring properties. Our in-place agricultural systems (trees, shrubs, biomass, etc).
- The Ranch staff, employees, apprentices, guests, teachers/facilitators (Chris Shanks, Peter Kring, Dave McEvoy, Ian Woofendon, etc), extended family/friends network, and workshop participants. Mastatal community members, Costa Rican's located regionally and nationally interested in our work, and the greater global sustainability community. The Mastate Charitable Foundation.
- Our knowledge and expertise.

#### *Money*

This includes all sources of money potentially available to us.

- What is earned through teaching workshops, selling nursery plants, and selling agricultural products.
- Money generated from greater Ranch income streams such as apprenticeship, guests, and visiting groups.

- Potentially money is available from outside funders or grants.

### *Holistic Context*

#### *Statement of Purpose*

This expresses what we were formed to do.

This is the central statement in the below image.

#### *Quality of Life*

This expresses what we want our lives to be, what we value most, and what we want to become.

This is the middle group of statements in the below image.

#### *Forms of Production*

This is what we have to produce or do in order to achieve our Quality of Life statements.

This is designated by the outer group of statements in the below image.

#### *Future Resource Base*

These are our long term needs that must exist in the future in order to sustain our Forms of Production and consequently our Quality of Life.

- People: We will have healthy working relationships amongst the Rancho Mastatal community and the goodwill of our neighbors. We will offer value and trust to our customers.
- Land: The land will have an abundance of clean water, closed nutrient cycles, and increased biodiversity. Our agricultural systems will produce an abundance of food from perennial sources.

**Testing our Decisions**

Managing holistically in practice means testing our decisions and actions against a set of

question. This helps us consistently consider the environmental, social, and financial sides of all the decisions we may make. We ask these questions in order to move us closer to the Quality of Life we desire and accomplish our Statement of Purpose.

The testing questions used are the following: □

- Cause and effect: Does this action address the root cause of the problem, or merely a symptom?
- Marginal reaction: Is there another action that could provide greater return, in terms of your holistic goal, for the time and money spent?
- Sustainability: If you take this action, will it lead toward or away from the future resource base described in your holistic goal? (Social/ Land)
- Weak link:
  - Social: If you take this action, will you encounter or create a blockage to progress?
  - Biological: Does this action address the weakest point in the life cycle of the organism you're trying to control or promote?
  - Financial: Does this action strengthen the weakest link in the chain of production?
- Energy/money source & use
  - Is the energy or money to be used in this action derived from the most appropriate source in terms of your holistic goal?
  - Will the way in which energy or money is to be used lead toward your holistic goal?
- Gross profit analysis: Which enterprise contributes more to covering the overheads of the business? (Use this test when comparing two or more enterprises.)
- Society & culture:
  - How do you feel about this action now?
  - Will it lead to the quality of life you desire?
  - Will it adversely affect the lives of others?

By asking all of these questions to a proposed action, such as expanding our nursery into a separate enterprise, we do our best with the information in front of us to improve our lives. From this point forward HM asks that we assume our decisions are incorrect, that we monitor them closely, and finally that we respond accordingly to this feedback. Eventually this entire process becomes second nature.

Again this is an exercise in creating a temporary Holistic Context. My experience tells me that managing ecosystems and communities of groups of decision makers is complex. It is not easy work. It is often based on observation and communication; both skills that take lifetimes to develop well. HM provides a framework to speed this up in order that our ecosystems and communities may flourish.

Scott Gallant

I would encourage anyone interested to explore the following references for more information:

[Savory Institute](#)

[Holistic Management International](#)

[Managing Wholes](#)

[Bruce Ward Legacy Trust](#)

## Community Stories:

### *Social Permaculture*

The question in the Ceiba lounge weighs us all down, asked by one of the visiting graduate students from the University of Peace during our *charlaon* permaculture at the Ranch. How can we affect the wide-scale change needed to tip the current status quo into a sustainable and regenerative future? How can we get the general public to get on board with the cultural component embedded within permaculture?

□□ I asked the students to first begin by defining what they thought permaculture was, the frequent response affiliated it with being a form of sustainable agriculture. Palpable examples were thrown out, including organic gardening, composting, use of biodigestors and the like. I have noted that most newcomers to permaculture are aware of solution designs, that is, the actual things that can be achieved manually to solve many of the opportunities presented by our dependence on depleting non-renewable resources and a growing population. All of the above are accurate tools that are used to fit into the framework of permaculture, but they are not permaculture on their own. If we are to attempt to orchestrate a true change in our current consumption and trashing of living systems that sustain us, then we should look at how we can move ourselves into a mental shift of values. That in it of itself would require a sincere reevaluation of ethics, beginning with our individual selves. We will need to collectively adapt the conscientious, ethical models that are encompassed by permaculture, in order to drive our behavior, actions, and thus alter the course of our destiny. How can we jump out from the science of doing and back into the introspective soul-searching required to analyze our internal framework and address the invisible structure of human relationships within a community? Coincidentally, I found one answer was right there in front of us- undertaking exactly what we were doing. □□



The Ceiba lounge, an otherworldly open-air cob construction finished earlier in the year, also acts as base camp for our community check-ins every Saturday. When I first arrived to Rancho Mastatal and discovered that these informal reunions were held there to discuss our mental and emotional state, I hesitated big time. I was not comfortable about the idea of exposing my thoughts and

feelings out into a public forum, much less to people I hardly knew. When I was further told that it was common for individuals to break out in tears and that one hour could easily stretch into two, I was ready to shout, “pass!” when the oral baton was handed over to me. However as I would soon find out, these communal gatherings would end up becoming the most influential mechanism to reaching a harmonic human balance in the Ranch’s unique and challenging setting. It serves to strengthen the bonds between us, and assist in our compassion with and understanding of one another.

□□ Occidental Arts and Ecology Center (OAEC) founding member Brock Dolman states in an interview for Sustainable Revolution,

□□ *“The culture word in permaculture is the ego-system restory-ation. How do you re-story the ego-system? What’s the story it believes in? If greed is what drives it, we’ll all be sunk. Are you a part of it or apart from it? That’s an ecological literacy challenge. Our modern era, I think, is the most ecologically illiterate expression of humanity the planet has ever known. How can we create a revolution that’s more engaging and nourishing to spirit and body than what’s been offered to it by the mechanistic, industrial culture. We’ve got to win people over.”* □□

Further, as Starhawk, author of *The Empowerment Manual: A Guide for Collaborative Groups* put it, “Our human relationships continuously seem to be the biggest constraining factor in the work of transforming society. So, is there a way to do them better?” □□

Not only does permaculture seek to welcome back the natural world and it’s cycles into our thought processes when designing human settlements, it demands the reinvigoration of our relationships with one another by the identification of our species as being members of an intricate and interconnected web. It makes you fully understand, internalize, and respect that we cannot exist without the breath and death of someone and something who is now and who came before you, in a continuous and inescapable loop of energy. It reminds us to zoom out from the big picture and science of Zone 1’s through 5’s where we can easily get stuck, and zoom in to what is sometimes termed as Zone 00: the heart and mind of the self. □□

The boundaries of our Saturday check-ins are quite simple: you must wait your turn to speak, you cannot interrupt when someone else is speaking, and the discussion should flow in a circular manner so that everyone gets an opportunity to speak out as much or little as they would like. I can imagine the Ranch has seen all kinds of people at its check-ins over time, from various backgrounds, ages, experiences, and cultures. One could argue that it has actually flourished because of this communicatory process. I believe those of us in Western society could probably get the ball rolling quite far if we began allowing people back into our personal space, popping the bubble wrap that we’ve rolled ourselves into for various reasons. We need to boldly share our affairs of the heart and mind, our human experiences, and allow ourselves to look inwardly in efforts to highlight commonalities and goals. If a more equitable consensus can be reached that benefits the communal good, why not go after it if we are all reliant on one another at the end of the day? □□

‘If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together,’ states a popular phrase. If we

are to move forward as societies, we need to each first become a sturdier piece of the foundation that our community can build upon. Rancho Mastatal nurtures this relationship by dedicating and committing time aside to listen and respond to one another in an open manner and become acquainted with each individual surrounding us. This creates a more structurally sound community where each member feels supported, respected, appreciated, and knows they have a seat at the table (or lounge!) with their name on it. We need to make the time to listen to and nurture our own spirit, to face our shadows, to identify our strengths and weaknesses, and then speak about them in arenas that are not judgmental and egotistical.

□□I believe the hardest part dealing with the challenges up against us in the world comes down to facing ourselves, in all of our 360 degrees of humanity. One of the solutions I have for that student's question from my time at the Ranch is: the world as I see it could certainly use more Ceiba lounges in each of our respective communities, if only we brave the elements to reveal ourselves whole-heartedly in them.

*Leti*

### **Intern/Guest Gossip:**

#### ***Momonchino Seed Butter***

Here at Rancho we have the ever-exciting time of year when the momonchino, or rambutan, tree is busting full of juicy, red fruit ready for harvesting. Many are joyous about this fruit as it has an amazingly sweet flesh that comes in its own personal package. The outside shell is a leathery and softly spiked skin that when ripped open exposes the inside sweetness. The white flesh that surrounds it's almond shaped seed is comparable to a grape's texture and the taste is too good to describe. Their most common use around here is as a great snack

and the seed is spit out. As I returned from my visa-trip to Nicaragua, I was really excited that our HUGE tree in the Banana Bowl was finally ripe for picking. The only problem was that we had more fruit than we could keep up with harvesting and eating. I was happy to use this amazing juice and fruit to flavor balms and hoochs as well as make jam out of the flesh. With the help of my friends here and some eager volunteers, we began processing our asses off. Every rainy afternoon we were at the long dining tables perfecting our fileting skills and removing the flesh from the seeds and collecting all the juice. Basket after basket, hundreds of rambutans came through our processing line and we bathed in sweet goodness. We made pancakes, jam, smoothies, ice cream, popsicles and Italian ice, and many tasty drink creations using the fruit and juice. After all that processing, we are left with the skins (which the goats loved to eat) and the seeds. I didn't want to see them go to waste so I set of experimenting. I tried the solar oven for drying and then roasting (not easy in the rainy season), I boiled them first to see if any new results came (nope), I then popped them into the cob oven with a high heat and let them cook. Maybe for a bit too long as they all burned. I was crushed to see that many days of working on these seeds was a waste, until I



*Sole helping in the kitchen*

picked up one of the charcoaled pieces. The now roasted seed has an outer shell that comes off quite easily to expose the nicely browned inner seed that resembles a long peanut. It was an exciting discovery and I spent a part of my 23rd birthday watching a movie and cracking open dozens of these things. After weeks of harvesting, processing, roasting, and peeling (and in between hiding the seeds so that interns would not eat them) I had about 6 cups of roasted seeds ready for a ranch style alternative to peanut butter (which we all crave quite often). My first step was to grind them in our hand cranked coffee grinder which I imagined would instantly produce a creamy snack that was one and done. Not the case. I instead got a powder that tasted like boring, dry flour. With some help and suggestions, I came to the following recipe to create smooth and delicious momanchino-seed butter.

2 Cups roasted and peeled seeds  
¼ Cup liquid tapa dulce  
1Tsp honey  
1Tsp salt  
1-2Tsp coconut oil (optional)

Put ingredients in food processor for 30 seconds, mix up to gather dry parts from the edges, and then blend for another minute. The butter should be able to stick together easily when balled up, if it does not, add more tapa. Store in refrigerator. Enjoy alone as a snack or combine with flour and mashed banana for a dessert crust (Alex made a tasty tart with raspberries!) □□

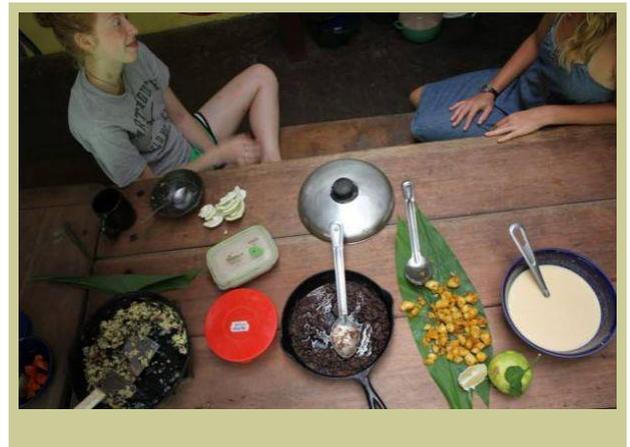
*Shannon Dellert*

### **Comida Corner:**

#### ***H.H.'s 7/11 BIG GULP SLUSHIE***

Makes 8 servings of this rich and delicious breakfast accompaniment.

½ Watermelon chunked and frozen overnight  
½ Cucumber skinned and chunked  
1 Apple cored and chunked (optional)  
¼ Cup of Mamonchino/Rambutan Juice (substitute lemon or lime juice if unavailable)  
1 Tbsp Tapa Dulce  
½ Cup of water



□ Blend ingredients in blender until desired consistency is reached. May take two or three blenders to blend all ingredients dependent on the size of your blender. Put in serving container and leave in fridge until time to serve. □□ Provecho!

## Inspirational Impressions:

### *Dig In*

“Find your place on the planet. Dig in, and take responsibility from there.” □

– Gary Snyder

Abrazos, □ □

The Ranch Crew

